

Information for people who use NHS nutrition support services

The NICE quality standard for nutrition support sets out how a high-quality nutrition support service should be organised so that the best care can be offered to people using NHS services in England. Nutrition support is any method of feeding that aims to improve or maintain the level of nutrients in the body.

In the quality standard, malnutrition is a condition where a person is not getting enough calories and nutrients, such as, protein and vitamins, to meet the body's needs.

NICE quality standard for nutrition support

The quality standard for nutrition support is made up of 5 statements that describe high-quality care for patients. These statements are about the best care you should receive and are summarised below.

1. People admitted to hospital, attending an outpatient clinic for the first time or having care in a community setting are offered checks for their risk of malnutrition using an accurate and reliable tool.
2. People who have malnutrition or who are at risk of malnutrition receive a management care plan that, in combination with any food they are able to eat, aims to provide all the nutrients their body needs.
3. People who are screened for the risk of malnutrition have the results of their screening and the goals of any nutrition support (such as special nutrient-rich foods, nutritional supplements and fortified foods, or liquid food given through a tube) they are having recorded and communicated in writing when they transfer within and between settings.

4. People who are managing their own artificial nutrition support (feeding through a tube) and/or their carers are taught how to prevent, recognise and respond to any problems with their wellbeing or their artificial nutrition support system. They are also given contact details of a specialist who can provide urgent advice and help if needed.

5. People receiving nutrition support have their need for nutrition support, their method of nutrition support and the risks, benefits and goals of their nutrition support reviewed at planned times.

Your care

In the NHS, patients and healthcare professionals have rights and responsibilities as set out in the NHS Constitution (www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/NHSConstitution/index.htm). All NICE quality standards are written to reflect these. You have the right to be involved in discussions and make informed decisions about your treatment and care with your healthcare team. Your choices are important and healthcare professionals should support these wherever possible. You should be treated with dignity and respect.

Information from NICE about nutrition support

The full quality standard for nutrition support, written for healthcare professionals, is available from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/QS24.

NICE also produces guidance (advice) for the NHS in England and Wales about preventing, diagnosing and treating medical conditions, based on the best available evidence.

NICE has produced guidance on nutrition support, available from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG32. The guidance was used, along with other sources of information, to develop this quality standard.

Information for patients and carers about the care and treatment recommended in the NICE guidance on nutrition support is available from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG32/publicinfo. It is written to help patients, their families and carers to understand the care and treatment options that should be available in the NHS.

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