

Department of  
**NUTRITION & DIETETICS**

# Management of Nutrition Post-Discharge



# What is Malnutrition?

This brochure focuses on the undernutrition aspect of malnutrition, which is a condition caused by inadequate intake of nutrients. Poor appetite or increased nutritional requirements due to medical conditions, can result in inadequate nutritional intake.

## Who is at Risk?

- Individuals with poor oral intake as a result of:
  - Reduction in appetite
  - Early satiety (feeling full after only a small amount of food)
  - Experiencing change in taste from medications or treatment
  - Nutrition related symptoms (e.g. nausea, vomiting, bloating, diarrhoea)
  - Swallowing or chewing problems
  - Cognitive or mood issues such as dementia
- Individuals with increased nutritional requirements due to medical conditions such as:
  - Cancer, sepsis, trauma, or after major surgeries

## What are Some Possible Consequences of Malnutrition?

- Loss of weight and muscle mass
- Reduced functional status
- Poor immunity
- Poor wound healing
- Higher risks of complications after surgery
- Longer recovery times from illnesses

## What Should I do After I am Discharged?

- **During admission**, you or your loved one may have tried some dietary strategies, including consuming oral nutrition supplements to maximise nutrition intake.
- **Upon discharge**, it is important to continue ensuring adequate nutrition to help with recovery and to avoid re-admissions to the hospital.
- Oral nutrition supplements (ONS) are beverages used by individuals who are unable to meet their nutritional requirements through oral diet alone.

- The recommendation to continue or discontinue the ONS will depend on how much you are able to eat:
  - ☐ If you are only able to eat less than ½ the usual amount at meals, top up each meal with \_\_\_\_\_. If your appetite gradually improves back to normal, you may discontinue ONS.
  - ☐ If you are able to eat more than ½ the usual amount at meals most of the time, you may discontinue ONS.
- ONS can also be flavoured with tea / coffee / Milo, or added to foods (oats, or blended with fruits) for some variety. They can be taken hot or cold depending on personal preference.
- Continue to monitor your weight and oral intake over the **next month**.

## What are Other Dietary Strategies You can do to Maximise Your Nutrition Intake?

1. Aim to have small, frequent meals throughout the day
  - ✓ Have six small meals instead of the usual three large meals
  - ✓ Eat more when your appetite is good e.g. some people eat better in the early morning
2. Make every mouth of food count
  - ✓ Choose high energy foods and drinks e.g. cream-filled biscuits, cakes, desserts or ice cream
  - ✓ Try to include fruit juices, 3-in-1 cereals, high protein drinks such as full cream milk and yoghurt drinks between meals
3. Fortify your foods to improve the nutritional quality of your food
  - ✓ Add sesame oil, crack an egg or some braised peanuts into your porridge
  - ✓ Put a thicker layer of spread onto bread and biscuits
4. Enjoy your meals and eat a variety of food
  - ✓ Vary your meals so eating does not become a chore
  - ✓ Eat with your family or friends so that mealtimes are enjoyable occasions

## When Should You Consider Seeing a Dietitian?

- ☐ You have unintentional weight loss of 5% or more in 1 month
- ☐ The amount of food you are eating is getting lesser and you are unable to take the recommended amount of ONS

If you have **at least 1** of the above, it is recommended that you consult with a dietitian for a more detailed assessment.

A dietitian can help to:

- Evaluate your current eating habits and assess your specific dietary needs for your health conditions.
- Provide personalised advice and a nutrition plan that meets your nutritional needs and goals
- Monitor and re-evaluate your nutritional progress at regular intervals to assess if nutritional goals have been met

## Where can I get More Information?

To find a dietitian, please call 6357 8322 for appointment. You will need to obtain a referral from your doctor for a dietitian consultation.



Clinic B2  
TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2  
Contact:  
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart  
phone to access the information online  
or visit

<https://for.sg/ttsh-health-library>

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