

Suggested 7 Steps to Appropriate Prescribing of Adult Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS)

Promoting Good Nutrition (PGN) regional guidance available at [LINK](#)

IMPORTANT: This guidance does not override the individual responsibility of health care professionals to consider individual patient needs. Consider underlying medical conditions (including end of life care), swallowing difficulties (outside the remit of these 7 Steps) and risk factors for disease before offering food first advice or prescribing ONS

Step 1: Identification of nutritional risk – Nutritional Screening (patients screened as per PGN using MUST)

Follow action plan as outlined below and refer to local department of Nutrition and Dietetics if MUST ≥ 2 as follows:
(Exemptions from MUST: pregnancy, undergoing dialysis, receiving enteral feeds or parenteral nutrition, patients in critical care units, and patients on end-of-life palliative care pathway)

Low risk MUST Score = 0	Medium risk MUST Score = 1	High risk MUST Score ≥ 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record MUST details Recommend a WELL BALANCED DIET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record MUST details Document nutritional care plan Promote 'Food First' Recommend High Protein / High Energy diet Care homes to monitor intake for 3 days (on food record chart) If improving continue until low risk If deteriorating treat as high risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record MUST details Document nutritional care plan Promote 'Food First' Recommend High Protein / High Energy diet Refer to dietitian (or implement local policy) Care homes to monitor intake for 3 days (on food record chart)



Step 2: Assess for and address underlying causes of malnutrition

Consider availability of adequate diet and identify any difficulties with reduced or altered food intake relating to:

- Ability to swallow or chew, ability to cook, assistance required with feeding, dentition etc.
- Impact of medication on appetite or nutritional intake
- Physical symptoms (e.g. vomiting, pain, GI symptoms)
- Medical diagnosis (including cancer, COPD, mental health issues, e.g. depression) and prognosis
- Environmental and social care issues including finance, substance abuse, inadequate support at home etc.

Consider solutions to these issues, e.g. onward referral to appropriate services or assessments. Dysphagia patients should be assessed by speech and language therapists. Thickeners / thickened ONS is outside the remit of this guidance.

Step 3: Set Goals

Set and document realistic and measurable goals, outline aims to achieve these goals and identify the end point of treatment

- Minimise losses, e.g. minimise weight loss during catabolism, e.g. cancer
- Maintain nutritional status, e.g. prevent further weight loss, maintain BMI = 20kg/m²
- Improve nutritional status, e.g. 0.5kg weight gain per week to achieve a target weight or BMI; evidence of wound healing
- Improve quality of life for those in the last few weeks and days of life

Step 4: Discuss 'Food First' Dietary Advice (Reinforce food fortification advice at each review)

Promote and encourage the inclusion of:

- one** pint of fortified milk per day (use with caution in CKD Stage 3 with hyperkalaemia and under guidance of dietitian in CKD Stage 4 &5)
- two** nourishing snacks per day
- three** fortified meals per day
- four** week review if MUST score of ≥ 2, or 2-3 months for those with a MUST score of 1, as per PGN guidance

[Food First advice leaflet for Community](#)

Step 5: Prescribe ONS

Consider prescribing 2 x ONS per day (600 to 800 Kcals) if:

- Food First dietary advice has been maximised for 4 weeks and it is not possible to meet nutritional requirements from food intake alone and there are clinical benefits and clear nutritional goals to work towards and patient's condition falls into one of the following ACBS categories:

▶ Short bowel syndrome	▶ Bowel fistulae	▶ Intractable malabsorption
▶ Proven Inflammatory Bowel Disease	▶ Following total gastrectomy	▶ Disease related malnutrition
▶ Pre-op preparation of undernourished patients	▶ CAPD or haemodialysis	▶ Dysphagia
- Give directions for use, i.e. one bottle/sachet twice a day, between meals. **Do not advise** 'as directed'.
- Prescribe a limited quantity initially (e.g. 7 day supply) to reduce wastage and no more than a monthly acute prescription thereafter and reinforce food fortification advice
- Record the weight, MUST score, ACBS indication, goal and review plan in the patient's record

Step 6: Review need for ONS

- Review weight, MUST score, dietary intake and compliance with ONS regularly, to monitor progress towards achieving goals and to re-assess condition and continued need for ONS. Reinforce Food First advice.

Step 7: When to Discontinue ONS

- Goals have been met and individual is no longer malnourished
 - Nutritional status improved and individual is back to an eating and drinking pattern which is sufficient to maintain weight (reinforce food fortification advice)
 - Individual is clinically stable and any acute episode has abated
 - If no further clinical benefit and / or use may cause the patient anxiety or discomfort e.g. those that may be in the final days of life
- N.B. Discontinue the ONS on the patient's medication list and document date, weight, MUST score and reason for stopping ONS

Arrange review to monitor progress, if appropriate.

Adapted with the kind permission of Hertfordshire Medicines Management Committee

Powdered ONS – Cost Effective Choice for Primary Care:

These are approximately 50% cheaper than ready-made ONS and are a cost effective option in primary care. However they are NOT SUITABLE FOR ALL PATIENTS, therefore the following should be considered for each individual patient prior to prescribing:

- Has ability to or someone to make up shakes?
- Access to fridge and fresh milk and adequate storage for both milk and prepared product?
- Ability to adhere to the requirements for safe handling of a fresh milk product?

Powdered ONS >1.5 kcal/ ml to make up with milk					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content[#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Aymes® Shake	57g sachet Available as 1 box of 7 x 57g sachets of one flavour	388 kcal 16g protein	Banana, Chicken, Chocolate, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstituted with 200ml FULL CREAM MILK (NOT WATER) • Unsuitable for those requiring ONS as sole source of nutrition • Use with caution in CKD Stage 3 patients with hyperkalaemia - use under guidance of Dietitian in CKD stage 4 & 5 • Can be used in reduced volume as per manufacturer's instructions. • Do not reconstitute with fortified milk unless directed by a dietitian.
	Ensure® Shake	57g sachet Available as 1 box of 7 x 57g sachets of one flavour	389 kcal 17g protein	Banana, chocolate, strawberry, vanilla	
	Foodlink® Complete	57g sachet Available as 1 box of 7x57g sachets of one flavour	385 kcal 19g protein	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Natural	
Powdered ONS 2.4kcal/ml Compact Milkshake style					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content[#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First Choice	Aymes® Shake Compact	57g sachet Available as 1 box of 7 x 57g sachets of one flavour	320 kcal 12.2g protein	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla, Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstituted with 100ml FULL CREAM MILK (NOT WATER) • Suitable for those requiring low volume • Suitable for those with early satiety • Unsuitable for those requiring ONS as sole source of nutrition • Use with caution in CKD Stage 3 patients with hyperkalaemia - use under guidance of Dietitian in CKD stage 4 & 5 • Do not reconstitute with fortified milk unless directed by a dietitian.

Ready Made ONS:

Ready Made ONS 2.4kcal/ml Compact Milkshake style					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content[#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Ensure® Compact	125ml bottle	300kcal 13g protein	Banana, Strawberry, Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for those requiring low volume • Suitable for those with early satiety
	Fortisip® Compact	125ml bottle	300kcal 12g protein	Apricot, Banana, Chocolate, Forest Fruit, Mocha, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla.	
	Altraplen® Compact	125ml bottle Available as pack of 4x125ml in one flavour	300 kcal 12g protein	Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana, Hazel Chocolate	

Ready Made ONS 1.5kcal/ml Milkshake style					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Aymes [®] Complete	200ml bottle Available as pack of 4x200ml in one flavour	300 kcal 12g protein	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	
	Ensure [®] Plus milkshake style	220ml bottle	330 kcal 14g protein	Banana, Chocolate, Coffee, Fruits of the Forest, Neutral, Orange, Peach, Raspberry, Strawberry, Vanilla	
	Fortisip [®] Bottle	200ml	300kcal 12g protein	Banana, Chocolate, Neutral, Orange, Strawberry, Caramel, Tropical, Vanilla	
	Fresubin [®] Energy	200ml	300kcal 11g protein	Banana, Blackcurrant, Cappuccino, Chocolate, Lemon, Strawberry, Tropical Fruits, Unflavoured	

Ready Made ONS 1.5kcal/ml yoghurt style					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Ensure [®] plus yoghurt style	220ml bottle	330 kcal 14g protein	Orchard Peach, Strawberry Swirl	

Ready Made ONS 2.4kcal/ml compact Milkshake style with fibre					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Fortisip [®] compact fibre	125ml bottle	300 kcal 12g protein 5g fibre	Mocha, Strawberry, Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Fibre containing ONS should be part of a constipation management plan including assessment of dietary fibre and fluid intake. • Suitable for those requiring low volume • Suitable for those with early satiety

Ready Made ONS 1.5kcal/ml Milkshake style with fibre					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Ensure [®] Plus Fibre	200ml bottle	310 kcal 13g protein 5g fibre	Banana, Chocolate, Raspberry, Strawberry, Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Fibre containing ONS should be part of a constipation management plan including assessment of dietary fibre and fluid intake.

Ready Made ONS 1.5kcal/ml Juice style					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Ensure [®] plus juce	220ml bottle	330 kcal 11g protein	Apple, Fruit Punch, Lemon-Lime, Orange, Peach, Strawberry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for those who do not like milky products but these are NOT MILK FREE • Not recommended as first line product for those with diabetes • Note protein content lower than milkshake style products • Unsuitable for those requiring ONS as sole source of nutrition
	Fortijuce [®]	200ml bottle	300kcal 8g protein	Apple, Black currant, Forest Fruits, Lemon, Orange, Strawberry, Tropical	
	Fresubin [®] Jucy	200ml bottle	300kcal 8g protein	Apple, Blackcurrant, Cherry, Orange, Pineapple	

Ready Made ONS Dessert style (>200kcal and >10g protein per portion)					
	Product name	Presentation	Nutritional content [#]	Flavours	Prescribing notes*
First choice	Nutricrem [®]	125g pot Available as pack of 4x125g in one flavour	225 kcal 13g protein	Strawberry, Vanilla, Chocolate orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for those requiring low volume
Second choice	Fresubin [®] 2kcal creme	125g pot Available as pack of 4x125g in one flavour	250kcal 13g protein	Vanilla, Chocolate, Praline, Wild strawberry, Cappuccino	

*Refer to individual product data sheets for full information.

[#]Protein content rounded to the nearest whole number.