

You, the dietitian, are often your health care team's first resource for nutrition. You can use these **six key principles** as your guide for incorporating nutrition into your patient's care plan.

## Principles to Transform Hospital Environment

### Create an Institutional Culture Where All Stakeholders Value Nutrition

- Serve as primary authority on 'all things nutrition'
- Educate key hospital stakeholders on improved patient outcomes and reduced costs achieved with optimal nutrition care
- Host hospital-wide learning opportunities at regular intervals

### Redefine Clinicians' Role to Include Nutrition Care

- Actively contribute nutrition expertise and engage other team members with assessment data on progress made with nutrition care efforts
- Regularly participate in interdisciplinary rounds

### Communicate Nutrition Care Plans

- If present, ensure mild, moderate, or severe malnutrition is included as complicating condition in coding processes
- Assume responsibility for ensuring that a patient's nutrition care plan is carefully documented in the EHR, regularly updated, and effectively communicated to all healthcare providers, including post-acute facilities and primary care physicians
- Lead an interdisciplinary team to create and maintain standardized policies, procedures, and EHR-automated triggers relevant to nutrition, including order sets and protocols in the hospital's EHR

## Principles to Guide Clinician Action

### Recognize and Diagnose All Malnourished Patients and Those At Risk

- Use standard malnutrition characteristics set forth by AND and A.S.P.E.N. guidelines
- Establish competence in nutrition-focused physical assessment

### Rapidly Implement Comprehensive Nutrition Intervention and Continued Monitoring

- Establish procedures to support policy that patients identified as at-risk during nutrition screen receive automated nutrition intervention within 24 hours while awaiting assessment, diagnosis, and care plan
- Lead an interdisciplinary team to establish nutrition algorithms for use in various scenarios when positive screens or diagnostic assessments are obtained
- Provide EN formulary and micronutrient therapy options in written form as a pocket-size document; make readily available to all staff to ensure fast intervention
- Work with interdisciplinary team to establish policies and interdisciplinary practices to maximize nutrient consumption and monitoring needs

### Develop a Comprehensive Discharge Nutrition Care and Education Plan

- Provide patients, family members, and caregivers with nutrition education and a comprehensive post-hospitalization nutrition care plan
- Ensure patient and caregiver understand the importance of follow-up nutrition assessment and education
- Provide specific information for nutrition follow-up appointments to patient and caregiver

Visit [malnutrition.com](http://malnutrition.com) for more tools, insights, and information on improving patient outcomes with nutrition.

Abbreviations: AND, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; A.S.P.E.N., American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition; EHR, electronic health record; EN, enteral nutrition; NPO, nil per os; ONS, oral nutrition supplement; PN, parenteral nutrition; PO, per oral.