Nutrition Care Recommendations: Physician

You, the physician, manage your patients’ overall plan of care. You can use these six key principles to guide you in working with your care team to improve your patients’ nutritional status.

Principles to Transform Hospital Environment

Create an Institutional Culture Where All Stakeholders Value Nutrition

- Provide leadership underscoring nutrition care as an essential part of patient-centered care
- Know evidence regarding impact of malnutrition and effectiveness of nutrition intervention
- Include dietitian in daily team huddles/rounds
- Incorporate nutrition into routine care checklists and processes

Redefine Clinicians’ Role to Include Nutrition Care

- Empower dietitian to cooperatively lead nutrition care as clinical team member
- Support nurse work processes to include nutrition screening and intervention

Communicate Nutrition Care Plans

- Establish and reinforce expectation that a patient’s nutrition care plan is carefully documented in the EHR, regularly updated, and effectively communicated to all healthcare providers
- If present, ensure mild, moderate, or severe malnutrition is included as complicating condition in coding processes

Principles to Guide Clinician Action

Recognize and Diagnose All Malnourished Patients and Those At Risk

- Consider nutrition status as an essential attribute of medical assessment, monitoring and care plans

Rapidly Implement Comprehensive Nutrition Intervention and Continued Monitoring

- Support policy that provides automated nutrition intervention within 24 hours in patients identified as ‘at-risk’ during nutrition screen, while awaiting nutrition assessment, diagnosis, and care plan
- Minimize NPO periods for your patient with scheduling of procedures/tests and remain mindful of “holds” on PO diets

Develop a Comprehensive Discharge Nutrition Care and Education Plan

- Include nutrition as a component of all clinician conversations with patients and their family members/caregivers
- Reinforce the importance of nutrition care and follow-up post-discharge to patient caregiver

Visit malnutrition.com for more tools, insights, and information on improving patient outcomes with nutrition.

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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.