



# Nutrition Care Recommendations: Nurse

As a nurse, you are your patients' first line of defense against negative outcomes. You can use these **six key principles** as your guide for advocating action against malnutrition in your hospital.

## Principles to Transform Hospital Environment

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

- Recognize the essential role that nurses play in achieving enhanced patient outcomes through individualized nutrition care
- Incorporate nutrition into routine care checklists and processes
- Include patient dietary intake into team huddles

### Redefine Clinicians' Role to Include Nutrition Care

- Ensure practices are in place to support implementation of nutrition intervention
- Develop processes to ensure that nutrition screening and dietitian-prescribed intervention occurs within the targeted timeframes
- Facilitate nursing interventions to treat patients who are malnourished or at risk

### Communicate Nutrition Care Plans

- Consult dietitian regarding nutrient intake concerns
- If present, ensure mild, moderate, or severe malnutrition is included as complicating condition in coding processes
- Incorporate nutrition discussions into handoff of care and nursing care plans

## Principles to Guide Clinician Action

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

- Screen every hospitalized patient for malnutrition as part of regular workflow procedures
- Communicate screening results through use of EHR
- Rescreen patients at least weekly during hospital stay
- Communicate changes in clinical condition indicative of nutrition risk

### Rapidly Implement Comprehensive Nutrition Intervention and Continued Monitoring

- Ensure that procedures allowing patients identified as 'at-risk' during nutrition screen receive automated nutrition intervention within 24 hours while awaiting assessment, diagnosis, and care plan
- Develop procedures to provide patients with meals at 'off times' if patient was not available or under a restricted diet at the time of meal delivery
- Avoid disconnecting EN or PN for patient repositioning, ambulation, travel, or procedures
- Work with interdisciplinary team to establish policies and interdisciplinary practices to maximize food/ONS consumption
- Monitor meal/ONS consumption and communicate to dietitian/physician via EHR

### 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 and caregiver



# Practices for Nurses to Support Implementation of Nutrition Intervention

**1**

**Screen every admitted patient for malnutrition, regardless of physical appearance**

**2**

**Make every effort to ensure that patients receive all EN or PN as prescribed to maximize benefit**

**3**

**Develop procedures to provide ONS in between meals or with medication administration to increase overall energy and nutrient intake**

**4**

**Create a focused mealtime and supportive mealtime environment**

**5**

**Take notice of patient meal consumption**

- Be vigilant to the amount of food eaten
- Sharing findings among the team (eg, during team huddles) facilitates development of a targeted nutritional plan

**6**

**Stay alert to missed meals**

- Develop procedures to provide patients with meals at 'off times' if patient was not available or under a restricted diet at the time of meal delivery

**7**

**Avoid disconnecting EN or PN for patient repositioning, ambulation, travel, or procedures**

**8**

**Consider managing symptoms of gastrointestinal distress while continuing to administer PO diet or EN**

- Nutrients may be administered while the source of distress is being identified and treated

**9**

**Remain mindful of 'holds' on PO diets or EN relative to procedures**

- Take action to reduce the amount of time that a patient's intake is restricted

**10**

**Identify medications and disease conditions that interfere with nutrient absorption**

- Develop plans to minimize the impact

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

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