

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Full Guideline: Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS)

Quick Read Summary	Quick Prescribing Guide to ONS on Notts APC Website
---------------------------	---

Contents

Page	
2	Executive Summary
3	Introduction, Aims, Scope and Development
4	Indications for ONS prescribing
5	When to refer for specialist Dietetic input
5	Stage 1 – Malnutrition Risk
7	Stage 2 - Assessment
7	Stage 3 - Goal Setting
8	Stage 4 - Initial treatment using 'Food First' advice and/or over the counter nutritional supplements
9	Stage 5 - ONS Prescribing
10	Stage 6 - How to Review
11	Stage 7 - Discontinuing ONS and Follow Up Review
12	Prescription of ONS in special cases- Palliative Care, End of Life, Substance Misuse
14	Further Information
15	References
19	Over the Counter Nutritional Supplements (Appendix 1)
20	Nottinghamshire ONS Formulary (Appendix 2)
23	Choosing which Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) to prescribe (Appendix 3)

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Executive Summary

- Healthcare professionals are advised to follow national guidance on nutritional assessment and follow guidelines according to the degree of malnutrition risk based on a MUST score ([Appendix 1](#)).
- If patients can eat normally, it is important to encourage high calorie 'food first' before starting supplements
- We recommend giving advice to fortify foods and the use of over the counter supplements. BAPEN Food First Advice [Food First/Food Enrichment \(bapen.org.uk\)](http://bapen.org.uk)
- ONS should only be used with higher risk patients and if indicated by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS). ONS should be prescribed with reference to the Nottinghamshire Area Prescribing Committee Joint Formulary
- Patients discharged from hospital with ONS on prescription should only have these continued if the GP receives a care plan letter from the clinician following discharge. This includes patients whose discharge summary states that ONS was commenced by a Dietitian. Patients should be reassessed by the Practice
- GP Practices should not prescribe ONS for care home residents simply on request and should be provided with all the information to justify a prescription ([Appendix 5](#)).
- If a patient fails to attend a review of their ONS prescription without reasonable rationale on multiple occasions, ONS should be paused until the prescriber has seen the patient to ensure safety as per all NHS medications
- Patients with complex nutritional needs (i.e. Renal Disease stage 4 and above and gastrointestinal disorders) may require specialist products and should be referred to the appropriate Dietetic Service
- Patients with swallowing problems should be referred to Speech and Language Therapy services (SALT) for assessment before ONS can be safely prescribed and before dietetic input
- For patients with Diabetes, milk-based ONS are preferred. These offer a lower carbohydrate content compared to juice based ONS. If milk-based ONS are not appropriate or not tolerated, juice style ONS may be used, with monitoring of blood glucose levels
- Care should be taken when prescribing supplements in substance misusers as once started, ONS can be difficult to stop. Supplements are often used to replace meals and therefore can be of negligible clinical benefit. Clear goals should be set for patients who meet the prescribing criteria
- It may be appropriate to recommend an over the counter multivitamin supplement e.g. Centrum® or Sanatogen® A-Z once daily, instead of ONS, for patients with pressure ulcers who are eating well and not malnourished in order to encourage wound healing
- Not all ONS are kosher approved, halal certified, vegetarian, gluten free or lactose free. Individual ONS products should be checked for their suitability for these patients as well as those with specific food allergies or intolerances

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Introduction

This document provides a guide on the appropriate prescribing of Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) for adults in the community in line with national guidance.

- Prevention of malnutrition is a complex process, best achieved through education, early intervention and food first approaches. ONS are commercially produced products to assist in the short term treatment of malnutrition. They should be prescribed for patients who have been identified as being at Higher Risk of malnutrition following a Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) score.
- ONS are expensive for the NHS and prescribing is sometimes deemed inappropriate, particularly when patients are on ONS prescriptions over long periods without adequate review. However, total exclusion or extreme restriction of ONS is equally not cost effective and limits optimal patient care for those who would benefit.
- The ONS listed within these guidelines are formulary products for the prescription by authorised healthcare professionals within the community. All other ONS products are restricted to Dietitian and specialist recommendation only and should not routinely be initiated in Primary Care.

Aims

- The aim of the guideline is to support all healthcare professionals in the management of ONS in the community and ensure consistency of care across Nottinghamshire. The guideline aims to provide support with high quality, clinically safe and cost effective prescribing to optimise patient care.

Scope

- This guideline is to provide advice and support on the prescribing of ONS for adults within Primary Care in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and excludes prescribing of ONS for children and enteral tube feeding. Special advice for the prescription of ONS for patients receiving end of life care or drug or alcohol problems is given at the end of the document.
- It is not the remit, nor would it be appropriate for this guideline to cover all aspects of malnutrition.

Development

- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB have updated these guidelines in accordance with the national evidence base alongside the involvement of Consultants, GPs, Dietitians, Pharmacists and other healthcare professionals. The guideline has been reviewed by the Medicines Optimisation Team, Senior Pharmacist Management Team, Area Prescribing Committee, Joint Formulary Group as well as national bodies in England.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Indications for ONS prescribing

The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) advises that ONS may be regarded as medicines for prescribing for the following approved indications:

- Short-bowel syndrome
- Intractable malabsorption
- Pre-operative preparation of undernourished patients
- Proven inflammatory bowel disease
- Following total gastrectomy
- Bowel fistulae
- Dysphagia
- Disease-related malnutrition

‘Disease-related malnutrition’ encompasses a wide range of conditions that may result in a requirement for nutritional support. The British National Formulary (BNF) definition of this includes cancer, neurological conditions, acute episodes of respiratory conditions, dysphagia, mental illness where all efforts to improve nutrition with diet manipulation have failed such as anorexia or dementia. The prescriber should therefore use their clinical judgement to determine when ONS is required and consider the individual circumstances of the patient.

Many supplements and food products are prescribable for those receiving continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) and haemodialysis or are specifically prescribable for individual conditions. These products would normally be requested by a Dietitian and should not be routinely started in primary care. Further details of these products can be found in the BNF.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

When to refer for specialist Dietetic input

Nutritional supplements should usually only be initiated after stages 1-4 have been completed and nutritional intake is still inadequate.

1. Identification
2. Overall assessment
3. Goal setting
4. Initial treatment - 'Food First' and non-prescribable 'over the counter' (OTC)
5. Initiating prescribable ONS
6. Review
7. Discontinuation of ONS
8. Follow up review

Dietetic intervention may be appropriate in any of the following circumstances:

- To assist in appropriate planning and goal setting for nutritional support for individual patients.
- To advise on nutritional supplementation strategies and their appropriateness of initiating ONS.
- Deterioration in nutritional status despite supplementation after excluding other contributory pathology.
- Cultural, social or religious influences affecting dietary intake.
- The presence of co-existing medical conditions such as Diabetes, Renal failure, Coeliac Disease or high cardiovascular risk.
- Where swallowing difficulties or other indications for modified food texture exist.
- Unexplained weight loss or wound healing issues.

These guidelines recommend referral to a Dietitian at MUST Score 4, or MUST 2+3 if appropriate and there are no improvements after four weeks using first line products (See [Appendix 1](#)).

Patients already being treated for an underlying problem by secondary care teams can be seen by the hospital Dietitians if their Consultant refers them.

Stage 1: Malnutrition Risk

Screening

The Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) developed by BAPEN is a validated screening tool and is used throughout the NHS in Primary and Secondary care. This tool should be used to help identify the risk of malnutrition where possible. Management plans should then be put in place according to the degree of malnutrition risk identified ([Appendix 1](#)).

MUST calculator [MUST Online Calculator - Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool \(bapen.org.uk\)](https://www.bapen.org.uk/must-online-calculator)

As a minimum, the patient's BMI (kg/m²) and recent weight loss should be calculated. Individuals in the following categories are likely to be at high risk of malnutrition and will require intervention:

- If BMI is < 18.5
- If BMI is < 20 with unintentional weight loss of > 5% in the last 3-6 months
- If BMI is > 20 with unintentional weight loss of > 10% in the last 3-6 months

NICE recommends that all patients are screened for malnutrition when they are registered with a new GP and at times when there are clinical concerns.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Residents in care homes should be screened on admission and monthly thereafter. Screening should also occur on the transfer between care settings and an action plan and goal setting should be implemented in the new care environment.

Look for concerning signs such as unintentional weight loss, damaged skin, poor wound healing, apathy, muscle wasting, poor appetite, altered taste sensation, impaired swallowing, changes in bowel habits, loose fitting clothes or prolonged illness.

Alternative measurements to work out a Risk Score

Use one of the alternative measurements to estimate height (ulna, knee height or demispan) if patient is unable to stand for a measure. Refer to the MUST Explanatory Booklet for further guidance:

http://www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/must/must_explan.pdf

If weight cannot be measured, mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) may be used to estimate the BMI category and can be used to help support an overall impression of a patient's nutritional risk when an accurate BMI cannot be obtained. In this case, a patient maybe scored as low/high risk instead of being given a MUST score.

Risk Score	Subjective Indicators
Low	Not thinning, weight stable. No unplanned weight loss, no change to appetite
Medium	Appears frail as a result of disease/condition or history of unplanned weight loss in previous 3-6 months, reduced appetite and ability to eat
High	Significant weight loss in previous 3-6 months, no oral intake for up to 5 days, in the presence of acute disease

Table adapted from Managing Adult Malnutrition in the Community (BAPEN, 2021)

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Stage 2: Assessment

Once nutritional risk has been established, the underlying cause of malnutrition and treatment options should be assessed and appropriate action taken.

Contributing factors:

- Ability to chew, issues with dentition and swallowing problems
- Total food and drink intake
- Physical symptoms e.g. pain, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea, oral thrush, wound healing
- Impact of medication (consider taste changes/any that may suppress appetite)
- Medical prognosis (appropriate intervention)
- Environmental and social issues
- Psychological issues
- Substance or alcohol misuse

Review the treatment plan in respect of these factors and if needed make appropriate referrals.

Stage 3: Goal Setting

Clear treatment goals and a care plan should be agreed with patients. These should be documented on the patient record and should include the aim of the nutritional support, ACBS indication for ONS if required, timescale for intervention and reviews. Consider disease stage and treatment, e.g. for palliative care, cancer treatments and those in advance stages of illness and adjust goals of intervention accordingly.

Goals should be realistic and measurable and may include:

- Target weight or a target BMI range over a period of time
- Weight maintenance where weight gain is unrealistic or undesirable
- Reduced rate of weight loss where weight maintenance is not realistic (e.g. cancer cachexia, end of life care)
- Improvement in oral nutritional intake
- Optimising nutritional intake during acute illness
- Wound healing if relevant

Goals can also be set to biochemical, functional, psychological or behavioural symptoms e.g. improvement in strength, physical appearance, appetite, ability to perform activities of daily living.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Stage 4: Initial treatment using 'Food First' advice and over the counter supplements

Goals can often be achieved by fortification of the normal diet or addition of over the counter (OTC) nutritional supplements.

Offering 'Food First' advice

- Eat 'little and often'. Aim for three small nourishing meals and 2-3 additional snacks throughout the day. Aim to eat every 2-3 hours in the day.
- Fortify full fat milk (four heaped tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder to one pint of full fat milk) and drink one pint each day
- If milk is not tolerated, try other calorific fluids e.g. fruit juice, carbonated drinks, soups
- Add or increase amounts of high-energy foods such as full fat milk, cheese, butter, cream, sugar to maximise energy and protein intake
- Choose foods that are most enjoyed

Over the Counter (OTC) Supplements

Patients who have unplanned weight loss should be encouraged to increase their food intake by having regular meals and extra snacks as per 'Food First'. If there is no improvement after following this advice, the use of OTC may be considered.

These products may be useful provided they are not contraindicated by Diabetes, Renal Disease, milk allergy or a vegan diet. Patients with these specialist dietary requirements should be referred to a Dietitian.

OTC supplements are available to buy at pharmacies, convenience stores, larger supermarkets, as well as online retailers ([Appendix 2](#)).

Patients should be encouraged to check individual products for recommended servings/day, which range from 1-2 serves. Patients should consult their GP/Health Professional with any concerns.

Patients should be reviewed every 3 months (or earlier) after being offered first/second-line treatment. All dietary advice should be encouraged to continue with improvements and positive change towards meeting goals.

Stage 5: ONS Prescribing

If first line approaches have failed to achieve a positive change towards meeting goals after 3 months, consider prescribing of ONS in addition to the food first changes which should be maintained.

The prescribing of ONS should not be considered for first line advice except when the patient is at higher risk of malnutrition (MUST 2+) as defined by screening or when an individual with COPD has a BMI <18.5kg/m² as recommended by NICE COPD Guidelines (CG101).

Patients must meet at least one of the ACBS criteria to be eligible for prescribed ONS.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Key Recommendations on starting ONS prescriptions:

- ONS should be advised between or after meals and not before meals or as a meal replacement. This helps to maximise effectiveness and not affect appetite for usual meals.
- To be clinically effective ONS should be prescribed as part of a wider plan to deliver calorie and protein intake that is sufficient to achieve weight gain.
- A one week prescription or starter pack should be prescribed initially to avoid wastage, in case products are not well tolerated.
- ONS should not be added to a repeat prescription to ensure regular review, both in terms of nutritional status and compliance with products and flavours.
- ONS products will contain varying amounts of Vitamin K, alongside the amount already consumed within the diet. Possible interactions of ONS should be considered for Warfarin resistant patients. INR should be monitored and treatment altered accordingly especially if ONS is commenced or changed after Warfarin is started.
- Modular ONS that provide only one or two nutrients e.g. Calogen, Fresubin Shot should be used under Dietetic supervision only.
- The patient should be reviewed in four weeks to monitor weight and check compliance to ONS.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Stage 6: How to review

ONS review

- Weight, BMI, MUST, how have they been eating/appetite
- Are they taking their ONS, which product? How are they currently taking their supplements?
- Ascertain if AYMES Retail / Complan over the counter were tried before the prescribed supplements. Promote self-care, Food First
- An assessment of the initial indication for the ONS and to see if this is still appropriate. Refer to ACBS indications
 - Disease related malnutrition including
 - Head, neck and oesophageal tumours
 - Severe COPD – FEV<30% and MUST score of 2 or more
 - Patients with a complex chronic condition requiring specialised feed
 - Dysphagia related to Stroke, MND, MS
 - Pre-operative preparation of malnourished patients
 - Following total gastrectomy, intractable malabsorption, proven IBD, short bowel syndrome, bowel fistulae
 - Renal failure on CAPD or haemodialysis
- Recalculate the MUST score
 - For patients with a MUST score of 0, 1 or 2 recommend OTC AYMES Retail / Complan with monitoring of overall dietary intake and usage of supplement.
- Review current eating habits and to reinforce ‘little and often’ advice.
- Review of / or set treatment goals such as
 - Prevent further weight loss
 - Promote weight gain
 - Improve nutritional status
 - Promote wound healing
 Record the goals and set timescales for review and weight monitoring.
- Change the prescription to an acute or set a review date, to prompt regular reviews.
- Review if a switch to a first line powdered supplement is appropriate
- Patients meeting the following criteria should be referred to the appropriate Dietetic Department.
 - Patients scoring 4 on the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (‘MUST’)
 - Patients scoring 2+3 if there has been no improvement after four weeks after first line AYMES shake
 - Patients with Stage 3-4 Pressure Ulcers
 - Patients with complex medical conditions

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Stage 7: Discontinuing ONS Prescriptions and Follow Up Review

ONS should be discontinued when treatment goals are met. Providing that an effective plan has been prepared at onset, it should be possible to clearly identify the point at which the prescription of supplements can be stopped, e.g. BMI within healthy range (18.5-25), patient has re-established a normal dietary intake (regular meals and snacks), appetite returned to normal, weight stabilised. The prescribing GP should end the prescription once goals are reached.

Prescriptions may need to be reduced prior to stopping depending on the amounts. Ideally, the patient should be reviewed 1-3 months after discontinuation to ensure there are no concerns. Consider relapsing remitting conditions e.g. COPD, IBD.

Rationale for stopping the ONS prescription should be documented on the patient record, together with any relevant monitoring information including weight/BMI/MUST/Risk Score and initial goal of treatment.

Follow up Review

Once goals are achieved, the patient should be reviewed again after three months to ensure there is no recurrence of the initial problem. If there are no further issues monitoring should continue as documented earlier in these guidelines. If there is future recurrence of malnutrition, the pathway should be re-started at stage 1.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Prescription of ONS in Special Cases

Palliative Care

Use of ONS in palliative care should be assessed on an individual basis. Appropriateness of ONS will be dependent upon the patients state and their treatment plan. Emphasis should always be on the enjoyment of nourishing food and drinks and maximising quality of life.

Patients may have many years to live and may be undergoing palliative treatment to improve quality of life. Therefore if a patient's nutritional intake is compromised, ONS may be beneficial and may improve treatment outcomes.

Goals of End of Life intervention

- Nutritional support to help maximise quality of life, comfort, symptom relief & enjoyment of food.
- Maximising enjoyment of food (if requesting and able).
- Maximising quality of life in later days.

Intervention

- Provide reassurance and support to patient family that reduced appetite is a normal response.
- Consider treating reversible symptoms.
- Nourishing diet focussing on enjoyment of food, without pressure for patient to eat
- Little and often, food and drink that the patient likes.
- Consider food first approach by adding butter, cream, cheese, milk powder to enrich the nutritional value of food.
- ONS may be beneficial in some patients on psychological grounds. If ONS felt to be beneficial and patient wishes to try these, OTC products should be the first line advice. If a patient is unlikely to consistently manage at least two ONS daily, they are unlikely to derive any significant benefit to their nutritional status.
- Artificial feeding is only indicated when it is in the best interests and when achievable goals can be established.
- Dietitian referral may not be appropriate, however the Dietitian from end of life team, oncology or community should be contacted if a healthcare professional or the patient has any queries.

Treatment decisions about end of life nutrition are difficult and rarely based on evidence alone. Many considerations factor into the decisions that families and providers make about feeding, including provisions in advance directives or living wills, cultural, religious and ethical beliefs, legal and financial concerns. There is a role to engage in end of life discussions with the patient and family, to ensure that there are no unrealistic expectations associated with nutritional care.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Use of ONS in Substance Misuse

- Substance misuse is not a specified ACBS indication for ONS
- Substance misusers may have a range of nutrition related problems such as poor appetite (particularly with opioid use), weight loss, nutritionally inadequate diet, constipation, poor dental hygiene, chaotic social circumstances (leading to issues with food preparation) and related medical conditions such as Hepatitis C or liver disease
- Problems can be created by prescribing ONS e.g. once started on ONS it can be difficult to stop the individual having them. ONS may be taken instead of meals and therefore offer no additional benefit. They may be given to other members of the family and/or friends or sold and used as a source of income. Substance misusers can be poor clinic attendees, making it difficult to weigh them, monitor goals and re-assess need for ONS

ONS should not routinely be prescribed in substance misuse unless the following criteria are met:

- BMI <18kg/m²
- Evidence of significant weight loss (>10%)
- Co-existing medical condition which could affect weight or food intake.
- After nutritional advice has been given by a healthcare professional and tried by the patient.
- The patient is in a rehabilitation programme e.g. methadone or alcohol programme or on the waiting list to enter a programme.

Recommended monitoring if ONS is initiated:

- The patient should be weighed and measured. Usual nutritional goals set and monitored as per other patients and these guidelines.
- Maximum prescription should be for 600-800kcal/day e.g. a 300-400kcal ONS twice daily
- A first line ONS should be offered initially. These are cost effective, which the patient mixes with whole milk.
- Prescriptions should be on acute, not repeat prescriptions, to facilitate monitoring and review.
- If a patient fails to attend on two consecutive occasions, ONS should be paused
- If weight gain occurs, continue until usual weight or acceptable weight is reached and commence a withdrawal plan by reducing one supplement per day initially for one month, then discontinue ONS.

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Further Information

Stopping malnutrition at source is best achieved by raising awareness

Food first, making food count, milkshakes, fortified drinks:

[Food First/Food Enrichment \(bapen.org.uk\)](http://www.bapen.org.uk)

Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool online calculator:

<https://www.bapen.org.uk/screening-and-must/must-calculator>

Food first leaflet:

<https://www.nottsapc.nhs.uk/guidelines-formularies/>

Optimise Rx:

Programmed “point of prescribing” alerts for GPs, record weight, BMI and MUST

Information for Health Care Professionals

- **BAPEN** British Association for Parental and Enteral Nutrition: www.bapen.org.uk. Key documents and reports ‘MUST’ toolkit, including ‘MUST’, explanatory booklet, e-learning and ‘MUST’ calculator
- **BNF** British National Formulary: www.bnf.org.uk
- **BDA** British Dietetic Association: www.bda.uk.com. Information on food first approach and other Fact Sheets <https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home>
- **Malnutrition Task Force** <http://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/resources/>: Resources and best practice examples for managing malnutrition
- **British Lung Foundation** <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd>: Health information about living with COPD
- **NICE** National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: www.nice.org.uk
Refer to Clinical Guidance CG32: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg32> and associated QS24: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs24> for Nutrition Support in Adults. Also CG101: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG101> for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in over 16s
- **PrescQIPP** <https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/webkits/nutrition/> Provides a Nutrition Webkit link for ONS Guidelines and other information on prescribing of Nutritional items. Including a resource; ‘**Fabulous Fortified Feasts**’, which is a collation of useful recipes, advice and ideas for increasing the calorie and protein intake of people with weight loss or people with or at risk of malnutrition

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

References

- Brotherton, A., Stroud, M. & Simmonds, N. (2010) Malnutrition Matters: Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care. BAPEN Quality Group, BAPEN
- Cawood, A.L., Green, C. & Stratton, R. (2010) The Budget Impact of Oral Nutritional Supplements on Older Community People at High Risk of Malnutrition in England. Proceedings of the Nutrition Society; 69, OEE7, E544
- City Hospitals Dietetic Department and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group Medicines Optimisation (2016) Guidelines for Prescribing Oral Nutritional Supplements in Adults. Sunderland Medicines Optimisation Committee
- Cochrane Collaboration (2007) Dietary advice for illness-related malnutrition in adults (review). The Cochrane Library www.cochrane.org
- Cudjoe, A., Dhir, R. (2013) A Guide to Prescribing Adult Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in the Community. St. Georges Healthcare NHS Trust and Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group
- Derbyshire Joint Area Prescribing Committee (2014) Oral Nutritional Support (ONS) Guidelines for Adults
- Elia, M. (2015) The Cost of Malnutrition in England and Potential Cost Savings from Nutritional Interventions. Malnutrition Action Group of BAPEN and the National Institute for Health Research Southampton Biomedical Research Centre.
- Elia, M. & Russell, C.A. (Eds) (2009) Combating Malnutrition; Recommendations for Action. A report from the Advisory Group on Malnutrition, led by BAPEN, BAPEN
- Elia, M. et al. (2017) Cost-effectiveness of oral nutritional supplements in older malnourished care home residents. Clinical Nutrition. Article in press: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2017.02.008>
- Elia, M. et al. (2016) A Systematic Review of the Cost and Cost Effectiveness of using Standard Oral Nutritional Supplements in Community and Care Home Settings. Clinical Nutrition; 35, (1); 125–137 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2015.07.012>
- Guest, J.F., Panca, M., Baeyens, J.P., de Man, F., Ljungqvist, O., Pichard, C., Wait, S & Wilson, L. (2011) Health Economic Impact of Managing Patients following a Community-based Diagnosis of Malnutrition in the UK. Clinical Nutrition; 30, (4); 422-429
- Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust & City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (2016) The Prescribing of Oral Nutritional Supplements. Medicines Management team in collaboration with Homerton Hospital Dietitians
- Hubbard, G.P. et al. (2012) A Systematic Review of Compliance to Oral Nutritional Supplements. Clinical Nutrition; 31, 293-312
- Kennedy, O. et al. (2010) Investigating Age-related Changes in Taste and Affects on Sensory Perceptions of Oral Nutritional Supplements. Age Ageing; 39, 733-738

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Leong, N, (2015) Guidelines for the Use of Oral Nutritional Supplements in the Community. Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

Lochs H et al. (2006) Introductory to the ESPEN Guidelines on Enteral Nutrition: Terminology, Definitions and General Topics. Clinical Nutrition; 25, 180-186

Malnutrition Task Force (2013) Cost of Malnutrition: Methods, Estimation and Projection, Jose Iparraguirre for the Malnutrition Task Force

NHS Central Eastern CSU Medicines Management Team (2014) Guidelines for the Appropriate use of Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) for Adults in Primary Care. Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS England (2015) Guidance-Commissioning Excellent Nutrition and Hydration (2015-2018). NHS England: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/nut-hyd-guid.pdf>

NHS North Staffordshire, NHS Stoke-on-Trent, University Hospital North Staffordshire NHS Trust, North Staffordshire Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Stoke-on-Trent Community Health Services (2011) Nutrition Prescribing Guidelines-Managing Undernutrition. Abbott Nutrition

Nieuwenhuizen, W.F. et al. (2010) Older Adults and Patients in need of Nutritional Support: Review of Current Treatment Options and Factors Influencing Nutritional Intake. Clinical Nutrition 29: 160-169

Padfield, J. Krishnan, R. Shah, S. Evans, A. and the BHR Medicines Management Team (2015) Guidance on the appropriate use of Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) for Adults in Primary Care. North East London NHS Foundation Trust, North East London Community Services, Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group

Parsons, E.L. Stratton, R.J. Jackson, J.M. & Elia, M. (2012) Oral Nutritional Supplements are Cost Effective in Improving Quality Adjusted Life Years in Malnourished Care Home Residents. Gut; 61, Suppl. 2, A17

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (2016) Nutritional Screening Assessment in Palliative Care; Standard Operating Procedure. Clinical Quality and Standards Group

Steering Group for Managing Malnutrition in the Community (2014) Staffordshire Nutrition Support Guidelines; 6 steps to Appropriate Nutritional Care for Adults and 'Make every Mouthful Matter' food first tool. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership in collaboration with East Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Stratton, R.J. & Elia, M. (2010) Encouraging Appropriate, Evidence Based Use of Oral Nutritional Supplements. Proceedings of the Nutrition Society; 2010, 69(4); 477-4

Quick Read Summary	Quick Prescribing Guide to ONS on Notts APC Website
---------------------------	---

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) in Adults		
V2.1	Last reviewed: 17/09/2023	Review date: 30/09/2026

Summary Prescribing Guide

- Products listed below can be started on acute (not repeat) after 'MUST' screening & first line 'Food First' treatment
- Over the counter (OTC) supplements can be purchased from pharmacies
- All patients initiated on ONS should have their treatment reviewed regularly
- ONS should be discontinued when treatment goals are met

1 st line ONS products	Prescribe first line if patient or carer can prepare a powdered ONS Use one / two per day						
	ONS name	Weight/ volume	Kcals/ servin g	Protein/ servin (g)	Flavours	Other information	Monthly volume for BD dose
	AYMES Shake	57g	384	19	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla, Neutral, Ginger	Starter pack with shaker	3192g or 56 x 57g
	AYMES Shake Compact	57g	320	15.4	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla, Neutral, Ginger	Low Volume Make up with 100mls Starter pack with shaker	3192g 56 x 57g
Ensure Shake	57g sachet (x7/box)	389	17	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	Starter pack with shaker	3192g or 56 x 57g	
2 nd Line ONS products	Prescribe when no first line product is appropriate or tolerated 200ml milkshake or yoghurt style						
	AYMES Complete	200ml	300	12	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla,	Starter pack 4 x 200ml available	11200ml or 56 x 200ml
	Ensure Plus	200ml	330	13.8	Banana, Chocolate, Coffee, Fruits of the forest, Neutral, Orange, Peach	4 x 220ml	56 x 220ml
	Fortisip Bottle	200ml	300	12	Banana, Caramel, Chocolate, Neutral, Orange, Strawberry, Vanilla	200ml	56x 200ml
	Prescribe when no first line product is appropriate or tolerated and reduced volume RTD required 125ml						
	AYMES ActaGain 2.4 Complete	200ml	480	19.2	Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana	One a day solution	5600ml or 28 x 200ml
	Ensure Plus Compact	125ml	300	12.8	Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana, Café Latte	125ml	56 x 125ml
	Fortisip Compact	125ml	300	12	Apricot, Banana, Chocolate, Mocha, Strawberry, Vanilla	125ml	56 x 125ml
If milk based ONS unsuitable	Prescribe when no first- or second-line products are suitable						
	AYMES ActaSolve Smoothie	66g 150 ml water	298	10.7	Mango, Peach, Pineapple, Strawberry & Cranberry	Vegan Starter pack available	56 x 66g
	Altrajuce	200ml	300	7.8	Apple, Blackcurrant, Orange, Strawberry	200ml	6 x 200
	Fortijuice	200ml	300	7.8	Apple, Lemon, Orange, Strawberry	200ml	6 x 200

Appendix 1: Over the counter nutritional supplements

Over the counter food fortifying products should be encouraged initially as part of the overall food first approach.

Powdered Products	Presentation	Flavours	Energy/ serving (kcal)	Protein/ serving (g)
AYMES® Retail	4 x 38g sachets	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	265-266 (using 200ml full fat milk)	14.9-15.1
Complan® Original	425g tub	Neutral	244 (x1 serving = 8 scoops or approx. 55g)	8.5
Complan®	4 x55g sachets	Delicious Banana, Rich Chocolate, Summer Strawberry, Velvety Vanilla	241-245 (using 200ml water)	8.5-8.6
Meritene®	7 x 30g	Chocolate, Strawberry	107 (using 200ml water)	9.3

Soups	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
Complan®	4 x55g sachets	Tasty Chicken	243 (using 150ml water)	8.7
Meritene® Soup	4 x 50g	Chicken, Vegetable	207 (using 150ml water)	7.0

Ready to drink shakes	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
Meritene® Ready to Drink	200ml bottle	Chocolate, Strawberry	250	18.8
Nurishment® Original	400g can	Banana, Chocolate, Mango, Peanut, Raspberry, Strawberry, Vanilla	380-424	20
Nurishment® Active	500ml bottle	Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	463-465	35

Appendix 2: Nottinghamshire ONS Formulary

ONS should only be prescribed after first line dietary advice (including food fortification and over the counter nutritional supplements) have been tried.

First-line ONS Products

Powders which require mixing with 200mls full fat milk should be used with caution in diabetics and patients with CKD. Not suitable for lactose intolerance or galactosaemia. These products are not suitable as a sole source of nutrition.

Product	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)	Notes
AYMES® Shake	57g sachet (x7/box)	Banana, Chocolate, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla, Ginger	384	19	
AYMES® Shake Starter Pack	57g sachet (x5/box with shaker)	Mixed box of 6 flavours above plus shaker	384	19	Samples https://aymes.com/pages/direct-to-patient-sample-service
AYMES Shake Compact 100ml milk	57g	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla, Neutral, Ginger	320	15.4	Make up with 100mls full fat milk for lower volume. Starter pack with shaker available
AYMES ActaSolve Smoothie 150ml water	7 x 66g sachets Vegan	Mango, Peach, Pineapple, Strawberry & Cranberry	298	10.7	3696g (56 x 66g)
Ensure® Shake	57g sachet (x7/box)	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	389	17.0	

- Prescribe a Starter Pack
- If ONS is tolerated and patient is compliant after the first week: issue a monthly acute prescription of 1-2 sachets daily of the patient's preferred flavours

Second-line ONS Products

200ml Milkshake style products

Prescribe one of the following:

Product	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
AYMES® Complete	200ml	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla	300	12
AYMES® Complete Starter Pack	200ml	Mixed pack of 4 flavours above	300	12
Ensure® Plus Milkshake style	200ml	Banana, Chocolate, Coffee, Orange, Peach, Raspberry, Strawberry, Vanilla	330	13.8
Fortisip® Bottle	200ml	Banana, Caramel, Chocolate, Orange, Strawberry, Vanilla	300	12
AYMES ActaGain 2.4 Complete Maxi	200ml	Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana	480	19.2

- Prescribe a Starter Pack OR a small selection of patients preferred flavours on acute for 1 week
- If ONS is tolerated and patient is compliant after the first week, issue a monthly acute prescription of two bottles daily of the patient's preferred flavours = 11,200-12,320mls

Ready to drink milkshake style liquid 125ml bottle with straw (check suitability of product for lactose intolerant individuals)

If a patient is able to tolerate milk, but a smaller volume is more preferable; prescribe one of the following:

Product	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
Ensure® Compact	125ml	Banana, Café Latte, Strawberry, Vanilla	300	12.8
Fortisip® Compact	125ml	Banana, Chocolate, Mocha, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla	300	12

- Prescribe a Starter Pack OR a small selection of patients preferred flavours on acute for 1 week
- If ONS is tolerated and patient is compliant after the first week; issue a monthly acute prescription for two bottles daily of the patient's preferred flavours (56 bottles = 7000mls)
- If the patient is unable to tolerate first-line or second-line ONS, consider third-line Products

Third-line Products

200ml Juice style products (clinically lactose free) Use with caution in Diabetics who cannot tolerate alternative supplements. Contain Cow's milk.

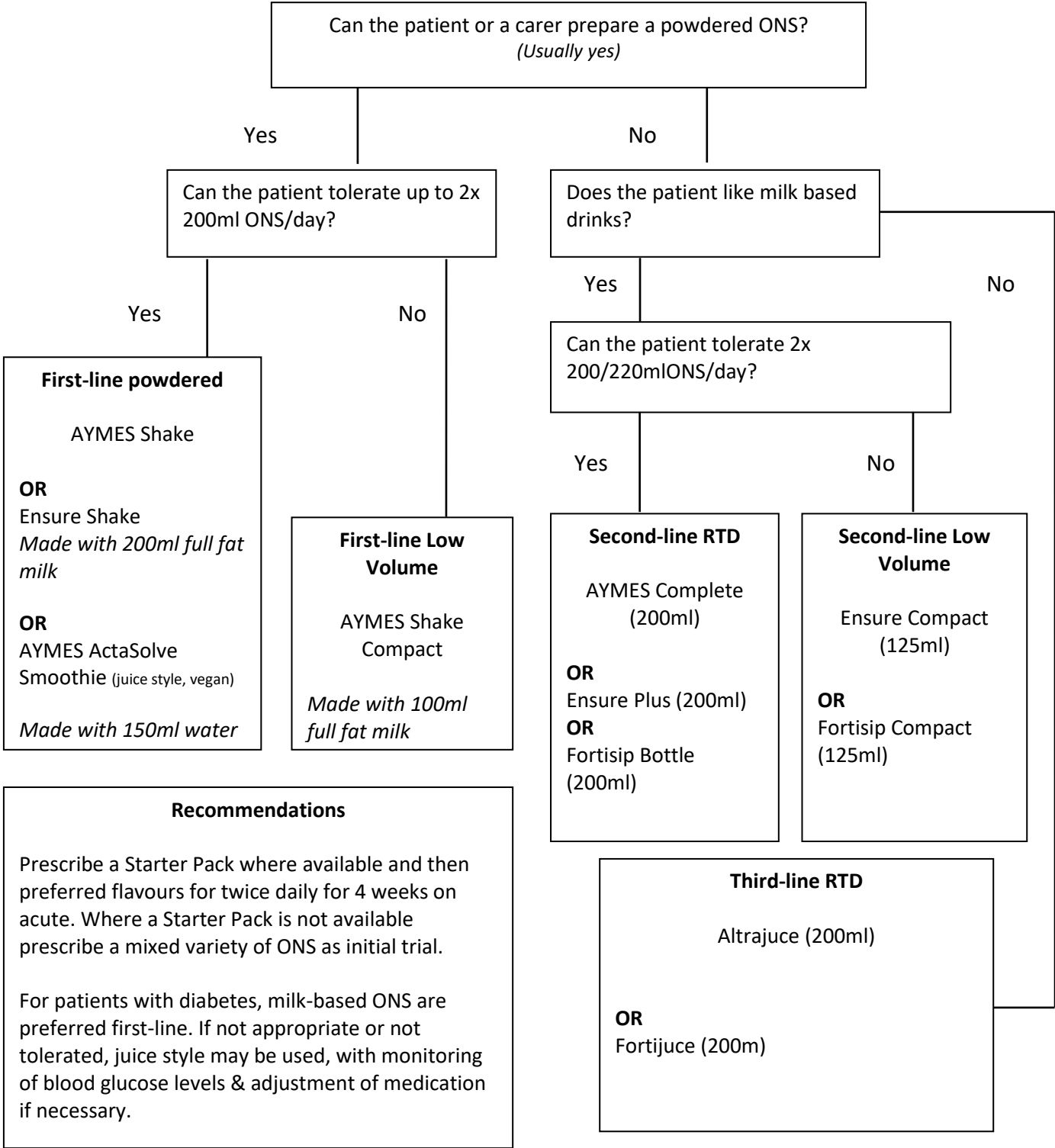
- Prescribe one of the following

Product	Presentation	Flavours	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
AYMES ActaSolve Smoothie	66g 150 ml water (vegan)	Mango, Peach, Pineapple, Strawberry & Cranberry	298	10.7
Altrajuce	200ml	Apple, Blackcurrant, Orange, Strawberry	300	7.8
Fortijuice®	200ml	Apple, Lemon, Orange, Strawberry, Tropical	300	7.8

- Prescribe a Starter Pack OR a small selection of patients preferred flavours on acute for 1 week

Appendix 3: Choosing which Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) to prescribe

Please first complete a MUST score and give Food First advice. Prescribe only if patient at Higher Risk (MUST 2+) where Over the Counter supplements have been unsuccessful. If patient meets criteria for Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) use the below for initial one week prescription, followed by four weeks on acute. Document the rationale, treatment goals and confirm date for review.



Recommendations

Prescribe a Starter Pack where available and then preferred flavours for twice daily for 4 weeks on acute. Where a Starter Pack is not available prescribe a mixed variety of ONS as initial trial.

For patients with diabetes, milk-based ONS are preferred first-line. If not appropriate or not tolerated, juice style may be used, with monitoring of blood glucose levels & adjustment of medication if necessary.