

Prescribing Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) Quick Reference Guide

STEP 1: Assess nutritional risk

BMI		Weight loss (in past 3-6months)		Acute illness AND has had or likely to be no nutritional intake for more than 5 days, score 2
>20	score 0	<5%	score 0	
18.5-20	score 1	5-10%	score 1	
<18.5	score 2	>10%	score 2	
Total score 0 to 6				
MUST score 0 Low risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider dietary advice if needed. Consider Step 2 to prevent potential malnutrition. Re-check MUST annually, or monthly if in care home. 		MUST score 1 Medium risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Steps 2, 3 and 4 If ONS is considered, advise OTC purchase. 		MUST score 2 or more High risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to dietician Follow Steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 Check ACBS criteria (below) before considering ONS in the interim.

STEP 2: Assess cause of (or potential for) malnutrition (examples below)

- Ability to chew, dental or swallowing issues
- Impact of medication
- Physical disability, impairment or symptoms e.g. pain, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea
- Medical prognosis
- Environmental and social issues
- Psychological issues
- Substance or alcohol misuse

STEP 3: Set treatment goal (examples below)

- Target weight or target weight gain or target BMI over a period of time
- Wound or pressure ulcer healing if relevant
- Reduced infections
- Weight maintenance where weight gain is unrealistic or undesirable
- Falls prevention or improved activities of daily living

STEP 4: Offer Food First Advice

- Increase calories and protein in everyday foods
- Assess progress and review in one month
- Care home** should provide fortified food, snacks, homemade milkshakes/smoothies. Use fortifying food care plan.

STEP 5: Prescribing ONS

- Consider if MUST score ≥ 2
- Check patient meets **ACBS criteria** (If ACBS criteria not met then suggest homemade food/drinks or buy ONS over the counter)
- Follow the [Kent and Medway Guidelines for prescribing ONS in adults](#) and the recommended products list.
1st line – powdered products
2nd line – oral sip feeds
- ONS should be prescribed twice daily
- For sip feeds initiate with starter packs to identify preferences and any intolerances.
- Prescribe as acute prescription. Avoid adding to repeat template unless a reminder is added to review the patient.
- Continue to encourage dietary intake.
- Ensure review date/reminder and care plan are in place. Ideally review within 3 months.

STEP 6: Reviewing and deprescribing ONS

- Ideally review within 3 months of initiation
- This should form part of the general medication review for the patient.
- Check the ONS care plan and individualised target.
- Recalculate MUST score if needed.
- Revisit dietary advice.
- Remove ONS product from repeat.
- If ONS should continue,
 - Ensure ACBS criteria still met
 - Check there is a review date/reminder for patient.

ACBS criteria:

- Short bowel syndrome ▪Intractable malabsorption
- Pre-operative preparation of undernourished patients ▪Proven IBD ▪Post-total gastrectomy
- Dysphagia ▪Bowel fistulae ▪Disease related malnutrition