

MEMORANDUM

Date: 3rd January 2018

To: Directors of Public Health Nursing
Directors of Nursing, Older Person Residential Services
Directors of Nursing, Intellectual Disability Services

From: Mary Wynne, Interim Nursing and Midwifery Services Director

Re: New Online Nutrition Supports Toolkit, Prescribing Pathway and List
www.hse.ie/nutritionsupports

A new online Nutrition Supports Toolkit, aimed at assisting first-line management of malnutrition in the community, is now available on the website at www.hse.ie/nutritionsupports. Please arrange to bring this new initiative and supporting resources to the attention of your colleagues as soon as possible.

The resources, which include an Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) Prescribing Pathway and List for the initiation and renewal of ONS, were developed as a joint collaboration between Primary Care and the Medicines Management Programme. The project aims to assist in improving the care and outcomes for people who are at risk of malnutrition and highlights the importance of a food-based approach.

The information in the toolkit is relevant to prescribers, including Registered Nurse Prescribers and to PHNs and RGN's working in the community, community dietitians and nurses within residential social care settings. **Please note the prescribing list applies only to residential care sites where ONS is reimbursed through the Community Drugs Scheme, i.e. GMS, DPS.** Where a site otherwise purchases ONS direct from medical nutrition company, please refer to the dietician/pharmacist on-site for guidance in relation to product choice and costs.

ONS are an effective evidence-based treatment for disease-related malnutrition when used appropriately. However, Irish and International evidence suggests that up to 30% of ONS prescribing is inappropriate. ONS should not be considered an alternative to, or replacement for food and patients who require nutrition support should always be given dietary advice in conjunction with an ONS prescription.

The new toolkit (www.hse.ie/nutritionsupports) incorporates resources for prescribers and for patients and includes both 4-page printable leaflets and a 222 page recipe book 'Making the most of every Bite' available to view online or to order from www.healthpromotion.ie. It also includes information and guidance on nutrition support for people in late stages of palliative care their families and carers.

Enclosed with this memo are:

- The Prescribing Pathway for the Initiation and Renewal of Standard Oral Nutritional Supplements for Adults Living in the Community
- The Standard Oral Nutritional Supplements Prescribing List for Adults Living in the Community

- Late Palliative Care oral nutrition support suggest care pathway for healthcare professionals & supporting 4 page leaflet for patients and carers

Included on the website are:

- Patient Information Leaflet - 'Making the Most of Every Bite' – A High Protein High Energy Dietary Advice Leaflet
- Patient Information Leaflet - How to use Oral Nutritional Supplements

The ONS Prescribing Pathway is intended to promote best practice and aid appropriate prescribing of ONS for patients and the ONS Prescribing List recommends first, second and third choice ONS, based on clinical evidence and cost. **High energy, high protein powdered ONS is the first choice product (Foodlink Complete®/ Foodlink Complete® with Fibre)**. Please note, this choice requires some minimal preparation and, where it is not suitable for a patient, the guidance recommends readymade second and third choices.

Please note that for patients under the care of a dietician, acute hospital team or those using ONS via enteral feeding tubes, prescriptions **should not** be adjusted without consultation. Prescribers retain the discretion to prescribe whatever ONS they believe best meets the needs of the patient.

We hope that these resources will be helpful for you and your patients. If you have any queries in relation to this please contact your local HSE Community Dietetic Service. Local contact details available at www.hse.ie/nutritionsupports.