

Nutrition Wheel: Information for GPs and Practice Nurses

Purpose of this information sheet

This information sheet has been put together to give you guidance about what to do if one of your patients is advised to see you to discuss the outcome of using the Nutrition Wheel with a volunteer, carer, or other community worker.

What is the Nutrition Wheel?

- The Nutrition Wheel is an interactive tool, which acts as a conversation starter to help identify those at risk of malnutrition (as undernutrition). It offers guidance, advice and signposting (e.g. social prescribing) for people likely to be at risk
- It is based on the questions that appear in the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist. (*The Patients Association Nutrition Checklist was published in December 2018, and has been validated against the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool ('MUST'). The Nutrition Wheel is an interactive version of this Checklist*)
- It is predominantly aimed at use by volunteers, carers and other community workers who do not traditionally carry out nutrition screening, or where nutrition screening is not appropriate
- It is **not** a screening tool or a diagnostic tool. As such, it should not replace validated clinical screening tools like the 'Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool' ('MUST'). However, the Wheel may be able to identify 'clinical concern' and then act as a prompt to refer someone for screening
- More information on the development of the Nutrition Wheel, its use in the community, and a short video, please visit wessexahsn.org.uk/nutritionwheel

In what situations would the patient be advised to come and see me and what actions should I take?

Situation	Reason	Actions / advice you might take
If the patient is on a special diet or has a condition that may impact on eating, e.g. stroke, cancer, dementia	Volunteers / carers will not have skills or knowledge to tailor advice to a condition or special diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information sheet • Provide reassurance • GP referral to dietitian as indicated
If the patient has experienced unplanned weight loss	Medical reasons for weight loss should be ruled out	Consider tests to rule out medical causes of weight loss
If the patient has been told they may benefit from a referral to specialist services, e.g. for adapted tableware, swallow assessment	The patient may have difficulty cutting, chewing or swallowing food, or coughing on eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information sheet • Provide reassurance • GP referral to specialist services as indicated, e.g. speech & language therapy (S&LT), occupational therapy, social services
If the patient is experiencing problems managing their thickened fluids	The patient may be at risk of dehydration due to difficulty managing fluids. A volunteer or carer may not have knowledge around fluid consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reassurance • GP referral to specialist services, e.g. S&LT as indicated • Provide information sheet on achieving correct consistency (<i>use local guidance / information sheet from dietetics / S&LT</i>)

Created in partnership by Wessex Academic Health Science Network, Bournemouth University, the Patients Association and the Malnutrition Task Force. V1.0 July 2019



Further information

For more information about the development of the Nutrition Wheel, the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist and undernutrition in general, please visit:

Nutrition Wheel: <http://wessexahsn.org.uk/nutritionwheel>

Patients Association Nutrition Checklist: <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/patients-association-nutrition-checklist-toolkit>

Undernutrition (OPEN toolkit): <http://wessexahsn.org.uk/OPEN-toolkit>

Patient information sheets

Here are some useful information sheets that have been produced by the Wessex Academic Health Science Network. They can be printed out and given to patients. Your local area may have alternative leaflets you can use, e.g. those developed by your local dietetic department.

Name of leaflet	Who it's for	Access link
OPEN undernutrition leaflet	Anyone at risk of undernutrition	http://wessexahsn.org.uk/img/projects/OPENeasypartA4.pdf
Eating and drinking well: supporting people living with dementia	Anyone with dementia at risk of undernutrition	http://wessexahsn.org.uk/img/projects/dementialeaflet.pdf
Eating well: guidance for people living with COPD	Anyone with COPD at risk of undernutrition	http://wessexahsn.org.uk/img/projects/Living%20with%20COPD%20A4-1525095647.pdf

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