



# Patients Association Nutrition Checklist

## *Explanatory Guide in light of COVID-19*

### What is the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist?

The Patients Association Nutrition Checklist is a paper-based tool to identify potential risk of malnutrition (as undernutrition) and offers guidance, advice and signposting on next steps. There are two versions available – the ‘patient version’, designed for patients to complete themselves, and the ‘staff version’, for completion by volunteers, carers and professionals with a person. Both versions consist of two key parts:

- **Section A** - four key questions to focus discussions around weight, unintentional weight loss and loss of appetite. Because research has validated these specific questions against 'MUST' ([Murphy et al, 2019](#)), the wording of these questions must remain unchanged
- **Section B** (B-D on the ‘patient version’) - to be used by/with people identified as likely to be at risk of malnutrition from using Section A. It includes additional questions to focus on the reasons for risk of malnutrition, and provides a framework for giving basic advice and signposting to services that can provide support. It has space to record any specific advice given, recommendations made, and any follow up plans. *However, please note that at the current time, many local organisations are not able to run (e.g. lunch clubs, day centres) due to COVID-19. It is recommended to check with local organisations including local council and volunteer organisations for needs and advice for social support.*

To download either version, please visit the Patients Association website: <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/patients-association-nutrition-checklist-toolkit>

### Why use the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist?

Around 1 in 10 people over 65 are malnourished. Malnutrition is a serious condition which can increase a person’s risk of infection, risk of frailty, and slow their recovery. Malnutrition is also more common among older people and those who are already socially isolated. In addition, many people at increased risk of malnutrition have been advised to stay at home and self-isolate. Social distancing and social isolation could impact a person’s access to the wide variety of foods needed to keep healthy and may make them want to eat less. The Patients Association Nutrition Checklist aims to help support patients and their carers to identify malnutrition and provides basic advice and signposting to sources of support to help reduce malnutrition.

### When should the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist be used?

- It can be used by any patient or carer (including volunteers, paid carers and healthcare professionals)
- If you’re a healthcare professional, please note that it is not a screening or diagnostic tool, and therefore should not replace validated screening tools like the ‘Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool’ (‘MUST’) and associated care pathways. The tool complements ‘MUST’ by identifying ‘clinical concern’ and then acting as a prompt to screen or refer someone for screening. In addition, the tool cannot monitor change in nutritional status. It should be used to identify risk of malnutrition, and provide guidance accordingly.

### Where can I go for more information?

For more information about dietary advice in light of the COVID-19 / coronavirus pandemic, please visit: <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-corona-virus-advice-for-the-general-public.html>

For more information malnutrition, please visit the Malnutrition Task Force website: <https://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk>

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