



Quick Guide: Referring Your Patients to a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY

Purpose: Increase referrals to a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to help your patients take advantage of the benefits of Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT).

Benefits to patients:

- Proper hydration, adequate nutritional intake, and development of special diets, especially for patients at risk for malnutrition and/or require feeding assistance.
- Ongoing blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and weight management support.
- Prevention of food and drug interactions.
- Monitored and managed digestive issues and food allergies, intolerances, or sensitivities.
- Customized healthy meal planning, food shopping tips and simple meal prep advice.
- After-care for gastric bypass surgery and consultation for weight loss medication.
- Action plans for mobility and physical activity to achieve fitness and strengthening goals.
- Food security through connections to community food and nutrition services.



Important clinical actions and patient expectations:

Clinical teams can prepare patients for their MNT appointment by providing the following information:

Referral(s) for initial and ongoing MNT sessions.
Current medical diagnosis, health conditions, treatments and relevant personal and family medical history.
Most recent height, weight, and body mass index measurements.
Most recent laboratory test results, including blood and urine values (A1C, GFR, ACR, lipid profile, basic metabolic panel).
An updated list of medications, supplements, herbal products and over-the-counter items they use or are considering, including assistive feeding devices.
Health care objectives you are working with the patient on, such as specific daily, weekly, or monthly blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and weight goal ranges to achieve.

Patients and care partners can expect to discuss the following information during their MNT appointment:

Care plan details provided by the healthcare team, including the reason for referral to RDN for MNT.
Current dietary, digestive and/or medical situations of concern.
Usual and recent changes in appetite, nutritional intake, hydration and bowel movement patterns.
Usual and recent changes in energy levels, stress, anxiety and sleep patterns.
Any concerns with obtaining adequate/frequent amounts of food, cooking/preparing meals and/or feeding themselves. Any dental, chewing or swallowing issues.
Specific health and nutrition-related goals they hope to achieve with the guidance of their RDN.

Costs for MNT

- Coverage and copay requirements for MNT services should always be confirmed with the patient's health insurance providers.
- Medicare Part B covers MNT services for patients diagnosed with diabetes, non-dialysis kidney disease, and who have had a kidney transplant in the last 36 months when referred by any Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)¹.
- Patients with diabetes may also be eligible for diabetes self-management training:
 - [Diabetes Self-Management Training \(DSMT\) Provided by Diabetes Care and Education Specialist \(CDCES\)](#)
 - [Reimbursement Benefit for Medicare Diabetes Self-Management Training](#)

Follow up with patients and their RDNs on the need for follow-up visits and additional MNT referrals.

- Medicare covers three hours of MNT for the initial year of referral and up to two hours of MNT for subsequent years
- Additional sessions may be covered in the same calendar year with a second referral when further MNT is medically necessary due to a change in diagnosis, medical condition, or treatment regimen.²

How to connect patients to an RDN:

- Provide a referral for MNT!
- Help patients find an RDN near them: <https://www.eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert>



Nutrition resources help you support your patients with their MNT goals:



[Healthy Eating Tips to Fight Chronic Disease](#)



[What You Need to Know About Meeting with a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist](#)

Resources:

1. <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/nutrition-therapy-services>
2. <https://www.eatrightpro.org/career/payment/medical-nutrition-therapy>