

Nutritional Supplements

Your Oral Nutritional Supplements explained:

What are nutritional supplements?

- Also known as oral nutritional supplements (ONS). They are made to a special formula to give you extra nutrition such as protein, energy, vitamins, and minerals.
- **N.B: For most people, they are only needed for a short time after discharge from hospital.**

Why have I been prescribed nutritional supplements?

- You have been prescribed a supplement drink to boost the nutrition you get from food.
- This is usually because you are ill or recovering from surgery or injury.
- You may need extra nutrition for healing and recovery, and / or you may not be eating as much as usual.

When should I take my nutritional supplements?

- Take the drinks between meals to avoid spoiling your appetite.
- **Do NOT take them instead of a meal unless your doctor or dietitian has told you to.**

Do the drinks need to be kept in the fridge?

- Ready mixed drinks: These do not need to be stored in the fridge, though many prefer them chilled.
- Store them in a cool, dry place away from sources of heat e.g. radiator, cooker.
- Each bottle is printed with a 'use by' date.
- Opened bottles must be kept in the fridge and used within 24 hours. **Once product is opened, always follow manufacturer's instructions for storage.**

Powdered drinks:

- When mixed, these can be kept for up to 2 hours at room temperature or up to 24 hours in the fridge. **Once product is prepared, always follow manufacturer's instructions for storage.**

Where can I get more nutritional supplements?

- Your GP can give you a prescription for supplement drinks, if this is part of your care plan.
- You will usually be given one month's supply at a time.
- Some types of supplement drinks can be purchased in pharmacies and supermarkets.
- **N.B: You may be prescribed a different product to the one you were given in hospital.**

How long will I need the nutritional supplements?

- You will need to take the drinks until the goals set by your doctor or dietitian have been met.
- E.g. weight stabilised, and appetite/food intake improved, or full recovery from surgery.
- Your GP or dietitian will decide if you still need them.

Can I take the drinks if I need thickened fluids?

- If you need thickened fluids, then you may require special pre-thickened nutritional supplements.
- Check with your Speech and Language Therapist or dietitian.

What if I have diabetes?

- If you have diabetes, you should monitor your blood glucose levels whilst you are taking nutritional supplement drinks.
- If you take medication, this may need to be adjusted.
- Speak to your doctor or dietitian for further information.

Details of your Health Care Professional and prescription:

Date: _____

Health Professional Name:

Contact: _____

You have been prescribed:

You should take _____ supplement sachets/bottles/pots.

Once/twice/three times a day.

Your treatment goal/s:

If you have **swallowing difficulties**, ask your GP to refer you to a Speech and Language Therapist for further advice regarding the types of food textures that are suitable for you.

*If you use thickened fluids do so under direction of a **Speech & Language Therapist**.

*If you have diabetes or high cholesterol, ask your GP to refer you to a **Dietitian**.

For healthy eating advice, please refer to the Eat Well Guide by visiting NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

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