



Adult Social Care & Health

Nutrition and Hydration Policy

Version 3

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
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Contents

Aim	2
Other Dietary Requirements.....	5
Hydration.....	6
Visual Screening	7
International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI)	9
Monitoring, Communication, Environment and Equipment.....	9
Recording.....	10
Individual Nutritional Tailoring	10
Author History	12

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

Aim

It is important to ensure an individual's food experience is positive, through enabling choice, healthy eating, promoting enjoyment of food, and making sure individual nutritional and hydration needs are safely met.

This document sets out how this will be achieved; outlining the requirements that need to be adhered to, the tools and methods to identify need, and how those needs should be met.

Eating Well

Care Quality Commission Regulation - Meeting Nutritional Needs

[Regulation 14, Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) Regulations 2014](#) sets out the requirements to ensure people receiving support from a regulated provider are provided with adequate nutrition and hydration to sustain life and good health and reduce the risks of malnutrition and dehydration while they receive care and treatment.

An individual's nutritional needs must be assessed, and food and drink provided accordingly and in a way that promotes independence and dignity.

Consideration of the individual's preferences, religious and cultural background, and special dietary needs must be considered. Health advice must be followed and prescribed nutritional supplements must be administered as directed.

The full regulation and guidance issued by the Care quality Commission (CQC) is available [on the CQC website](#).

Eatwell Guide

It is important to understand an individual's preferences and any religious and cultural requirements to ensure there is a varied range of meals and snacks available to accommodate these preferences and requirements.

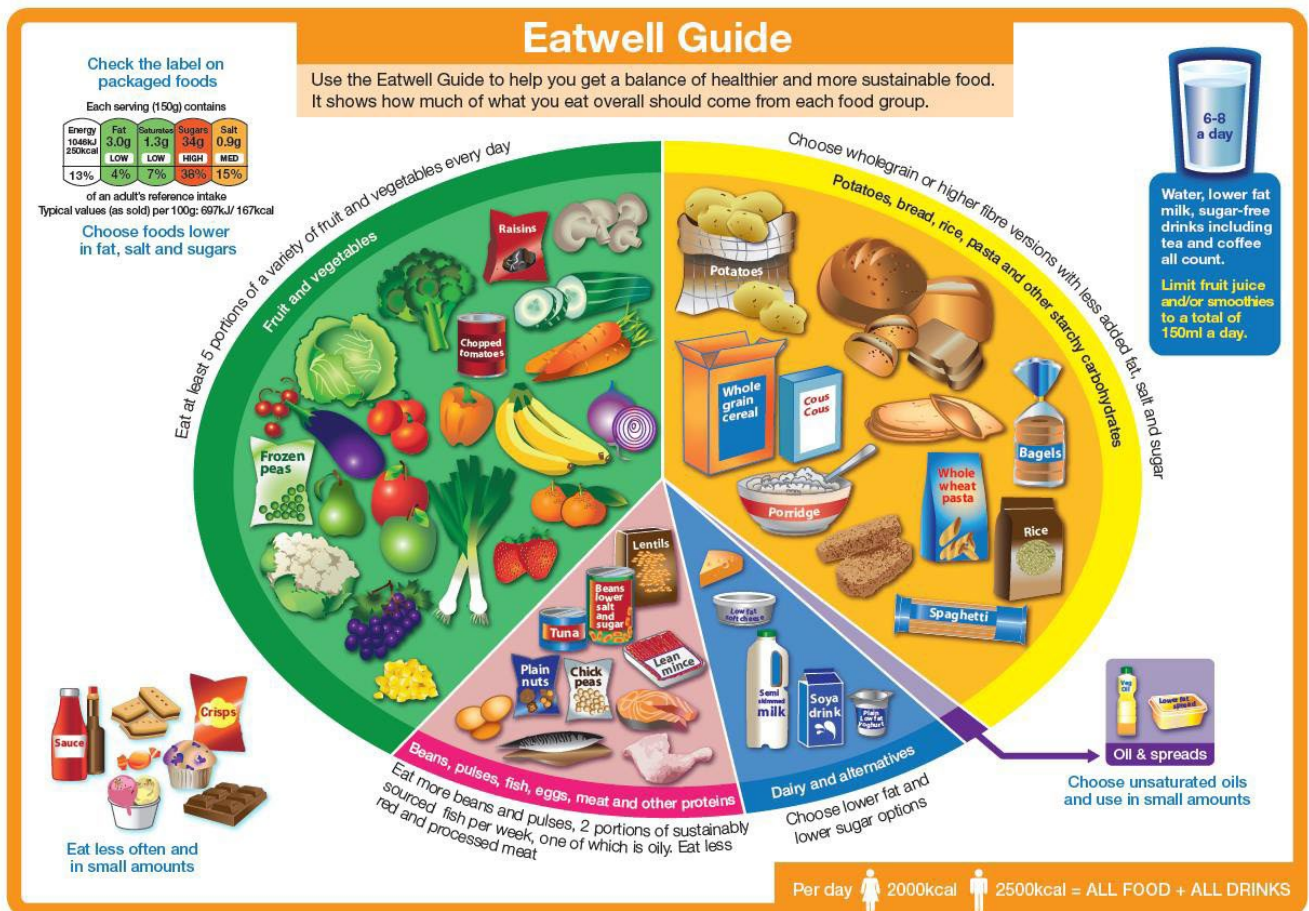
Where an individual lacks capacity to decide what they would like to eat, it is important that wishes and feelings are taken into account. A healthy balanced diet, in line with the Eatwell Guide, should be promoted to individuals where there is no overriding nutritional assessment in place, this will involve ensuring there are healthy options to choose from.

The principles of the Eatwell Guide are:

- eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day – fresh, canned, frozen, or dried
- base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible
- have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya milk)

- lower fat and lower sugar options
- eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins every day (including two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
- eat small amounts of food containing fat or sugar
- choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts
- drink six to eight cups/glasses of fluid a day

If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar then have these less often and in small amounts.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Food First

Food first is an approach used to prevent or treat malnutrition and unintentional weight loss through everyday nourishing food and drink. Any meal, snack or finger food offered to an individual must take account of any medical advice and other dietary requirements.

Flexible Mealtimes

Flexibility at mealtimes is important to meet the range of needs and choices of individuals. Meals should be planned to encompass a range of appetites and allow

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

for flexibility in when they are served, in line with safe standards. Consideration must be given to when is best to provide a main meal and lighter meals, based on the preferences and patterns of individuals, as this can impact on the appetite. Options should be readily available for those individuals who do not wish to eat at set mealtimes, ensuring there is appropriate choice available for the time of day.

Fortification

Fortified meals or drinks have ingredients added to increase the energy and/or protein content without increasing the portion size. This is used specifically for individuals at medium or high risk of malnutrition following a Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) assessment. (Further details on MUST under screening tools section).

If an individual is not eating well and losing weight, they may be lacking important vitamins and minerals. Therefore, individuals should be encouraged to eat a wide range of foods including fruit and vegetables. If an individual eats a very restrictive diet, they may require a multivitamin and mineral supplement. If you have any concerns refer to their GP or dietitian for further advice.

Further information on food fortification can be found in the [NHS Big Nutrition for Small Appetites Booklet](#).

Snacks

Snacks, in addition to meals, aid in meeting an individual's nutritional requirements. Nourishing snacks and drinks are a useful source of additional calories and protein for individuals who are at risk of malnutrition. Individuals who are medium or high risk following a MUST assessment should be encouraged to have at least two nourishing snacks or drinks per day.

Finger Food and Grazing

Finger foods are foods that can be easily held and eaten by hand. They can encourage and prolong independent eating and can be useful for those who are not able to hold or recognise cutlery, such as individuals with arthritic hands or tremors, or individuals who do not wish to sit to eat.

It is possible through the careful choice of meals and snacks that nutritional needs of individuals can be met using finger foods. However, this will need careful risk assessment, monitoring and awareness of the signs of malnutrition. If concerns are identified, a GP or dietitian should be consulted for advice.

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

Other Dietary Requirements

Diets for Medical Reasons

If an individual has specific dietary requirements, this must always be understood by all staff involved in the care of the individual, along with their preferences. This could include Diabetes, Coeliac Disease, allergens, modified texture diets and where weight management is required. These diets should only be provided on the basis of a professional assessment. All information must be clearly recorded on the individual's Personal Service Plan (PSP) and a Catering Communication Form ([appendix 1](#)) must be completed to ensure the staff preparing and serving the food are aware of the individual's requirements.

Individuals who are on specific diets may require observation and supervision at mealtimes. Where an individual requires observation and prompts it is very important the care worker does not get distracted from this important task and that this is clearly recorded on the PSP.

Food Allergies and Intolerances

All staff involved in the preparation and serving of food must understand the [allergens that are present in the food prepared and served](#).

Allergies – this is normally an immediate immune system reaction to an allergen and can include wide ranging symptoms, including diarrhoea, a rash, wheezing, swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat and in the most severe cases cause anaphylaxis. Immediate medical advice should be sought if any of these symptoms are identified.

Intolerances/Sensitivities – these are normally gradual reactions over time and not an immediate reaction that involves the immune system. However, if symptoms are identified medical advice must be sought.

Diets for Religious or Cultural Beliefs

Individual's beliefs and cultural background must be respected, and appropriate provision of food made, including, for example, the provision of kosher and halal food.

Some cultures have a period of fasting, which if the individual wishes to take part, must be respected. It may be that different foods are eaten during this time, and care must be taken to meet these needs where appropriate.

General guidance on cultural and religious considerations can be found at [appendix 2](#).

Vegans and Vegetarianism

Vegans do not eat any food of animal origin. These diets will need careful planning and consideration to ensure this need is met, and the food served should not have been compromised in any way.

Guidance on the provision of a vegan diet can be found at the [NHS website](#), and the

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

Eatwell Guide for Vegan diets is available at [The Vegan Eatwell Guide](#) It may be that additional supplements are needed to ensure the full range of nutrients for the individual. Seek professional advice if there are concerns.

Please note that vegetarianism is not considered a specialist dietary requirement, balanced vegetarian meals are suitable for all individuals, and vegetarian options should be available as part of weekly meal planning. There are different types of vegetarian diet, therefore an individual's preferences and reasons must always be understood and clearly recorded in their PSP.

Hydration

Individuals may be at risk of dehydration due to poor fluid intake. Dehydration is a loss of essential water from the body and it is known to cause serious effects if not replaced. Not drinking enough fluid can result in confusion, headaches and irritability, but also increases risk of falls, constipation and infections, and can cause longer term severe problems.

It is essential that fluids are freely available and physically accessible for individuals throughout the day and night. If individuals are not able to access fluids themselves they must be offered them regularly. Individuals who have modified fluids (thickened) are also at greater risk of dehydration.

Individuals are particularly at risk from dehydration on hot summer days and staff should ensure that there is a plentiful supply of jugs of water and juice throughout the day. Individuals must be encouraged to drink frequently.

Where there is concern regarding an individual's input and output of fluids or there is an instruction from a health professional then monitoring of this should be recorded on the Fluid Input and Output Monitoring Record ([appendix 6](#)).

Individual Tailoring

New admission

Immediately upon admission the manager on duty completing the paperwork must establish whether the individual suffers from any allergies or has any dietary requirements, medical, cultural or ethical, before food is offered.

All individuals admitted must have their personal service plan completed as soon as possible following admission and always within 72 hours.

Where an individual is admitted from hospital or the community in an emergency, any allergies or special diet in place for medical reasons must be identified. The GP and Social Care Summary, hospital discharge letter and hospital referral (if available) will assist with identifying this.

For planned admissions, any dietary requirements resulting from medical conditions or allergies will be recorded on the core support plan.

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

Allergies must be recorded on the individual's front screen on Mosaic under A3 warnings.

The Catering Communication Form ([appendix 1](#)) must be completed to alert the kitchen and care staff immediately.

Screening and Assessment Tools

Individuals must be assessed against nationally recognised guidance, undertaken by staff with the required skills.

Screening and assessment methods used by Derbyshire Adult Social Care are:

Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST)

MUST is a validated screening tool devised by the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) to identify whether an individual is at risk of becoming malnourished or at risk of obesity.

It consists of the 'Five MUST Steps' available in the [MUST tool and guidance](#).

This must be completed as soon as possible within the first three days of admission, and the score recorded on the MUST Alternative Measurement Tool from MOSAIC, the MUST outcome will inform the PSP. For individuals scoring one or two, the screening and monitoring and recommendations around the weighing frequency in the guidance must be followed.

Individuals in a CSB, only require a MUST to be completed if there is an identified need. This must be documented in their short-term personal service plan.

Care workers responsible for weighing individuals must raise any weight loss or gain with the manager on duty for them to investigate. The registered manager or their deputy are responsible for monitoring weight charts on a monthly basis to ensure people are being weighed in accordance with any recommendations following the MUST screening.

If the individual is not in a healthy weight range a referral to their GP or a relevant health professional must be made, and their advice followed.

Visual Screening

Visual screening should be used continuously to identify any changes or concerns in an individual's health, these include (but are not limited to):

- unintentional weight loss, signs include loose rings, belts or clothes
- fragile or sallow skin
- poor wound healing
- apathy or more sleepy
- altered bowel habits
- muscle wasting

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

- change to appetite
- change to ability to eat or drink
- prolonged or recurrent illness or infection

If any of these issues are identified the MUST assessment must be reviewed and a referral should be made to the individual's GP.

Oral Health Checks

Oral health impacts on the ability to eat. An Oral Health Needs Assessment on Mosaic must be carried out within the first three days following admission and reviewed as required or quarterly as a minimum for long term individuals. Any concerns or changes with an individual's oral health must trigger a review of the oral health assessment and a referral to the dentist made where this is appropriate.

Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) Assessments

An individual may have difficulty in swallowing, known as dysphagia, which can affect the ability and willingness of a person to eat and drink. Signs of dysphagia may include:

- reduced, slow chewing
- coughing or choking during or after eating/drinking
- recurrent chest infections
- regurgitation of food
- sensation of food sticking in throat
- increase in or persistent drooling
- gurgly 'wet' sounding voice after eating/drinking

If an individual is showing any of these signs a referral must be made to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) for a swallowing assessment. They can offer support and make recommendations on managing swallowing problems. This could include use of a fluid thickener and/or a texture modified diet. It is important to follow the recommendations of the SALT assessment when modifying an individual's diet. The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative described below is used where the texture of an individual's diet requires modification. This will be recorded following a SALT assessment and must be properly reflected in the individual's PSP and the Catering Communication Form ([appendix 1](#)).

If there are swallowing concerns and a referral needs to be made, this can be done through the [NHS Derbyshire Speech and Language Therapy website](#).

The PSP will need to be updated to reflect any advice and changes, and all workers must ensure they are aware.

Sometimes there is a delay between a dietary concern being raised and the SALT visiting and assessing the individual. Where that concern is around the risk of choking, advice should be sought about whether any modifications to the

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
-------------------------------------	---	--

individual's diet are required until the SALT has attended and completed the assessment.

Those involved in the preparation and serving of meals must understand the dietary requirements of each individual to ensure meals are safely prepared and individuals are given the necessary support.

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI)

Some individuals may need to have the texture of their food and fluids adjusted due to difficulty swallowing or an increased risk of choking. The IDDSI standard is used to describe the texture of modified foods and thickened fluids, and how they can be achieved to tailor food to meet the needs of individuals.

Where an individual has been referred for a SALT assessment the SALT will have made recommendations in line with the IDDSI framework. ([appendix 3](#))

[Appendix 4](#) gives an overview of IDDSI and links to guidance on how to prepare food and fluids for individuals with specific needs, along with the advice for testing modifications. Important to consider:

- all individuals where thickener is used must have had an appropriate assessment
- the consistency recommendations for individuals must be recorded in the PSP and on the catering communication form
- all staff who prepare food and drink with thickeners must have up to date safe and effective nutrition and hydration training
- thickeners must only be used for the individual they are prescribed for and used in accordance with the instructions

IDDSI recommendation factsheets and guidance that can be shared with the individual and their families to aid understanding and are available [on the IDDSI website under Patient Handouts](#).

Monitoring, Communication, Environment and Equipment

Monitoring

Individuals will only need food and fluid monitoring forms completed, and increased frequency of weighing, if a concern has been identified and information is being gathered for a professional assessment or following medical advice. A medical professional may advise that additional monitoring is also done. There is a Food Monitoring Chart at [appendix 5](#) should it be required.

Communication

It is essential that a person's individual needs are discussed with them and their families. It is important to consider any information or communication needs the individual may

Version: 3 FOI Status: Public	Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care & Health Nutrition and Hydration Policy	Originally Issued: August 2020 Issued: September 2023 Review Due: September 2025 Author: Quality and Compliance
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have, and to adapt communications accordingly. For more guidance see the Accessible Information Standard policy.

When working with other agencies or care providers it is essential that continuity of care is maintained. The format of communication should be agreed in advance to ensure this is effective.

Environment and Equipment

Consideration must be given to the environment in which the individual eats and drinks, wherever possible, ensure their individual requests and needs are met. Appropriate crockery and cutlery must be made available to promote independence.

Recording

It is essential that all nutritional and hydration needs are recorded and kept up to date within the individual's PSP and the Residential Client Information. All workers must be made aware of the needs of the individual if they are preparing or serving any food or drink to them. Any changes must be communicated quickly and clearly to the worker along with the practical requirements of these changes. Understanding of the individual requirements, especially in terms of medical advice, and its practical application, must be checked.

Any additional information received from health care professionals must be used to inform the PSP and uploaded onto the individual's electronic record in MOSAIC.

Individual Nutritional Tailoring

The individual's PSP must be updated to include all advice provided following a referral to any health professional.

Where a health professional has advised an individual requires dietary modifications it is essential that the PSP is updated to reflect the advice and to ensure that all staff involved in the preparation of the individual's food are clear on those requirements, through the provision of the Catering Communication Form ([appendix 1](#)). This should be readily available in all areas where food or drink are prepared.

Understanding the Policy

It is important that care staff fully understand the requirements of this policy. All individuals must be kept safe. If a member of care staff does not understand any aspect of this policy, they should immediately raise this with their line manager.

A training programme has been developed in line with this policy and it is expected all workers attend and maintain up to date training (when it is due for renewal or when there are changes) to understand the implications of this policy on their role.

Version: 2 PUBLIC	Nutrition and Hydration Policy Derbyshire County Council – Adult Social Care	Originally Issued: July 2020 V2 Issued: May 2021 Review Due: July 2023 Author: Quality and Compliance
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Author History

Approval and Authorisation

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Authored by Suzi Kelly	Senior Project Officer	August 2020
Approved by Tanya Henson	Senior Management Team	August 2020

Change History

Version	Date	Name	Reason
Version 1	August 2020	Suzi Kelly	New document
Version 2	May 2021	Suzi Kelly	Revised version
Version 3	September 2023	Quality and Compliance	Review and update