



Symptoms and problems

A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL FACT SHEET

DOES YOUR PATIENT HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS/PROBLEMS THAT YOU FEEL ARE AFFECTING THEIR ABILITY TO EAT AND DRINK?

The list in the table below may be worth exploring in more detail:.

✓	Problem/symptom	Considerations/Solutions	Referral
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling full all the time, reduced appetite	<p>Give advice on eating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutrient dense/nutritious foods • little and often <p>Give advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/reduced_appetite.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice from GP or Dietitian if individual has a 'MUST' score of 2 or more/has subjective indicators of malnutrition risk/has unexplained weight loss • Discuss with clinical pharmacist potential that any medications may be affecting appetite
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry mouth, sore mouth, breathlessness, chewing difficulties	<p>Advise on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soft, easy to chew foods, moist diet with added sauces • ensuring adequate hydration using nourishing as well as plain fluids <p>Give advice relevant advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/dry_mouth.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice from GP or Dietitian if symptoms are contributing to level of malnutrition • Discuss with clinical pharmacist potential that any medications may contributing to symptoms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of taste, taste changes	<p>Advise on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing taste with sauces, marinating, adding herbs & spices • trying new foods <p>Give advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/loss_of_taste.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice from GP or Dietitian if symptoms are contributing to level of malnutrition • Discuss with clinical pharmacist potential that any medications may contributing to symptoms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty Swallowing/ Dysphagia	<p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sitting up straight, preferably at a table, whilst eating • adjusting mealtimes so individual eats when they are less tired • eating smaller portions more often • changing the texture of foods to make them easier to swallow <p>Give advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/swallowing_issues.pdf</p> <p>Further advice for professionals at: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/dysphagia.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with GP and consider referral to a Speech and Language therapist • Discuss with clinical pharmacist potential that any medications may contributing to the dysphagia <p><i>Seek advice from a GP or Dietitian if symptoms are contributing to ongoing malnutrition</i></p>

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✓	Problem/symptom	Consideration	Referral
<input type="checkbox"/>	Altered Bowel Habit (e.g. constipation or diarrhoea),	<p>Changes in bowel habit and stools can arise as a result of disease, be a side effect of treatment (even some months after treatment has finished) or arise as a result of an infection. Advise on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping hydrated • Foods rich in fibre for those who are constipated • Avoiding fatty and spicy foods for those with diarrhoea <p>Further information is available: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/altered_bowel_habit.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the symptoms are severe or do not settle within a few days consider speaking to a GP or Dietitian • Discuss with clinical pharmacist the potential that any medications may be contributing to symptoms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Heartburn, reflux, feeling sick (nausea), vomiting	<p>Give helpful advice e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating little and often • Dry foods to help with nausea • Avoiding fizzy, fatty or spicy foods to help with heartburn and reflux <p>More information can be found in the following patient advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/reflux.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to GP or Clinical Pharmacist to check for causes – these could be related to the individual's disease status and/or a side effect of treatment/medication. • Consider referral to a Dietitian for more detailed assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Put off food by cooking smells	<p>Advise on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ways to avoid cooking smells e.g.: eating cold foods, using ready meals, putting lids on pans whilst cooking. <p>Give advice sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/bothering_smells.pdf</p>	<p>Seek advice from social prescriber who may be able to assist with access to services such as meals on wheels</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pain	<p>Being in pain can reduce appetite, induce nausea and make it difficult to enjoy food and achieve a balanced diet.</p> <p>Give helpful advice e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hydrated • If eating is difficult, try nourishing fluids such as; milkshakes, smoothies, hot chocolate/horlicks/lattes or creamy soups • Keep energy intake good by attempting to eat small volumes of food regularly and chose foods which are easy to eat, e.g. yogurts, jelly and ice cream, casseroles, tinned pasta, sandwiches, cake and cream 	<p>Seek guidance from GP/other members of MDT team about identifying the cause of pain and managing it</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety/Depression	<p>Poor appetite and weight loss can be caused by anxiety or depression, or can contribute to it</p>	<p>Seek guidance from GP/other members of MDT team about a referral</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low energy (fatigue), feeling too unwell to cook, difficulty getting to the shops to buy food, unable to prepare meals	<p>Discuss potential assistance e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online shopping • ready meals • prepared meal delivery services • help from family and friends' • prepare food when your energy levels are at their best, this might be in the morning <p>More information can be found in the following patient information sheet: malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/fatigue.pdf</p>	<p>Seek advice from social prescriber who may be able to assist with access to services such as meals on wheels, lunch clubs, assistance with shopping</p>

NOTE: Some individuals may need more specialist advice to treat their condition and/or symptoms for example those with diabetes. If there are concerns, it is advisable to refer on to other members of the multi-disciplinary team to investigate further.