

## 1.2 Primary care clinician pathway for assessing and managing malnutrition risk

**STEP 1: Patient identified as requiring oral nutrition support**  
Complete nutrition screening tool [MUST](#) or [Nutrition Checklist](#)

**MUST 0 Low Risk**  
Routine clinical care  
Repeat screening as per MUST

**MUST 1 Medium Risk**  
Observe  
If no concern repeat screening within 3 months. **If there are clinical concerns refer to dietitian and follow pathway**

**MUST ≥ 2 High Risk**  
Treat  
**Refer to dietitian**  
**Follow pathway**

**STEP 2: Assess potential underlying causes of malnutrition**  
Consider: • acute / chronic medical conditions • Ability to chew and swallowing issues • Impact of medication • physical symptoms (i.e. vomiting, pain, GI symptoms) • medical prognosis • environmental and social issues • psychological issues • substance/alcohol misuse. Consider actions to treat causes:  
[\(Underlying causes of malnutrition\)](#)

**STEP 3: Provide “food first/nourishing drinks” advice and suggest**  
Over the counter (OTC) products (i.e. Complan® or Meritene® or Nurishment®)  
List of OTC and useful resources can be found here: [Patient Resources](#); [OTC supplements](#); [Managing Malnutrition: Leaflets for patients and carers](#)

**STEP 4: Review after one month**  
Complete nutrition screening tool [MUST](#) or [Nutrition Checklist](#) again  
Improvement?

**NO - STEP 5: PRESCRIBE ONS**  
Refer to dietitian [Local Dietetic Teams](#)  
If ACBS criteria met, consider whether patient is more likely to take therapeutic dose (BD) of prescribed ONS compared to homemade or OTC supplements  
Discuss with patient preferences for type of ONS – i.e. milk based. fruit based. low volume. savoury

**YES**  
Reinforce advice  
Continue to monitor progress  
If problems re-occur, return to start of ONS pathway

**PRESCRIBE FIRST LINE ONS PRODUCT** (unless contraindicated) **ACUTE 28 DAY PRESCRIPTION TWICE DAILY AND REVIEW PRIOR TO RE-ISSUING**

**STEP 6: Review progress** after 4 weeks by returning to start of pathway

### GP QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PRESCRIBING ONS [Product Guide](#)

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