

A day in the life of a clinical dietitian

● Screening and referral

A Dietitian identify patients who needs a nutritional consult and responding on referrals from various wards. Doctors, nurses and other health professionals screen patients and if patients are at nutritional risk, patients are referred to the Dietitian.

● Nutritional assessment

A nutritional assessments includes anthropometry, biochemistry, medical and nutritional diagnosis and current nutritional intake.



● Nutritional plan

Based on the information gathered from the assessment, an individual nutritional plan is formulated. Depending on the need of the patient, a special diet, nutritional supplements, enteral feeds or parenteral nutrition may be required.

Nutritional supplements

Nutritional supplements:

Some patients do not meet their nutritional needs with a full ward diet and supplementary drinks are needed to make up the protein and energy deficit. Supplements will be ordered based on the individual requirements, tolerance and dietary intake.

Enteral feeds



Tube feeding:

When a patient is unable to eat, nutrition is supplied via gastric or jejunal feeding tubes. The Dietitian will calculate the feed rate and content based on individual requirements. The feed rate will be incrementally increased to meet the goal rate and nutritional requirements. The Dietitian will monitor the patients for any signs of feed intolerance and adjust the feed accordingly.

Parenteral nutrition:

The Dietitian will choose the appropriate formulation and rate based on the patient's requirements. Blood results and tolerance are monitored closely.

Parenteral nutrition



● Ordering of feeds

The Dietitian will order the appropriate special diets, supplements, enteral and parenteral feeds from a central point.

● **Ward rounds**

Each ward has a daily ward round where health care professionals from various disciplines discuss the management of ward patients. During these rounds the Dietitian has the opportunity to communicate the nutritional plan to the rest of the medical team and get input from the various members of the team.

● **Nutritional counselling:**

Patients requiring nutritional education are counselled on dietary and lifestyle modifications.

● **Follow-up and monitoring**

Patients are followed-up and adjustments are made to their nutritional plans to ensure that their nutritional goals are met. On discharge, some patient may qualify for the nutrition therapeutic programme. These patients will receive supplements and will be education regarding the at-home use of these products.



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