Nutrition Product Samples

Site Applicability
All VCH and PHC sites – acute, community and long-term care (LTC)

Practice Level

- Dietitian (RD): Basic skill
- RN, RPN, LPN, OT, Speech Language Pathologist (S-LP): Basic skill in collaboration with the registered dietitian (RD).
- OT and S-LP: Basic skill to provide thickeners product samples independently

Requirements

1. Nutrition product samples will be obtained from vendors as follows:
   - All vendor visits are made by appointment through the Dietitian Practice Leader or Coordinator (PL or PC) or the site or program designate.
   - Vendors will only provide nutrition product samples that are specifically requested by the Dietitian Practice Leader or Coordinator (PL or PC) or site or program designate.
   - Nutrition products must be approved for use by Health Canada.

2. Nutrition product samples are not intended to be used for ongoing treatment or therapy for any patients, clients or residents.

3. Nutrition product samples are provided to the patient, client or resident by a dietitian or by other health care professionals in collaboration with the dietitian.

   a. Nutrition product samples for tube feeding should only be provided by the dietitian.
   b. Thickener samples are provided in consultation with RD, OT or S-LP whenever possible

4. All care staff in acute care and LTC sites are responsible for adhering to site enteral formulary and following the standing operating procedures for non-formulary enteral products (BD-00-16-40088 and BD-00-16-40089).

5. Nutrition product donations are not accepted from patients, clients, residents or families.

Need to Know

- Nutrition product samples are provided free of charge to health care professionals by vendors to promote their products.

- Nutrition product samples are used to assess for tolerance or taste acceptance and choice is based on the nutritional needs of the patient, client or resident.

- Nutrition product selection requires dietitian involvement to ensure appropriateness of the specific nutrition product.

- Where similar or comparable nutrition product options exist, all appropriate options will be provided to the patient, client or resident and preference will not be given to one vendor or product line as per the VCH Conflict of Interest Policy and PHC Conflict of Interest Policy.

Guideline

1. Use of nutrition product samples will be considered in the following situations:
    - For patient, client or resident to trial the nutrition product (e.g. for taste acceptance or tolerance)
    - For teaching purposes (e.g. discharge teaching for thickening fluids at home)
2. Careful consideration of each specific p patient, client or resident need is important when determining recommendations for nutrition product samples. Consult a dietitian regarding the nutritional appropriateness of trialing a nutrition product sample. Note for trialing of thickeners consult with RD, OT or SL-P.
3. When providing nutrition product samples, the patient, client or resident should be informed of comparable alternatives and provided with a variety of nutrition product samples if available or as appropriate to ensure that preference is not given to one product or vendor in order to avoid any conflict of interest. If unsure of comparable alternative nutrition products, consult a dietitian for guidance.
4. Expiry dates of all nutrition product samples must be checked before providing them to a patient, client or resident. Expired nutrition product samples must be discarded.
5. Nutrition product samples are stored as per product guidelines. General guidelines include storing the nutrition product samples in a cool, dry shelf or cupboard. Once opened, nutrition product sample must be consumed immediately or tightly covered and stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Ensure that the nutrition product samples are rotated so that new product is placed in the back and old product is used first.
6. When required, an order from a dietitian or prescriber will be written to support administration of a nutritional product sample.

Patient and Family Education

Patient, client or resident will be instructed on the recommended type and volume of nutrition products for their individual use.

Documentation

Health care team members will document the following in the patient or client health record:

- Recommended type and volume of nutrition product(s)
- Appropriate options of nutrition product(s) discussed with patient, client, resident or family
- Type, brand and amount of nutrition product sample(s) provided
- Follow up and tolerance to the nutrition products and plan of care

Related Documents

PHC:

- PHC Conflict of Interest Policy (B-00-01-10109)

VCH:

- VCH Supply Chain Vendor Relations Guidelines (D-00-07-30304)
- VCH Conflict of Interest Policy (D-00-11-30031)

References

Safe Food Storage. (2018, October 19) Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/safe-food-storage.html

Definitions

Nutrition product sample: A package or tetra of a nutrition product that is consumed orally or enterally (e.g. oral nutrition supplements, tube feeding formula, or thickener) received free of charge from vendors.

First Released Date:	23-OCT-2020	
Posted Date:	23-OCT-2020	
Last Revised:	23-OCT-2020	
Last Reviewed:	23-OCT-2020	
Approved By: *(committee or position)*	PHC	VCH
	Endorsed By: PHC Professional Practice Standards Committee	**Endorsed by:** (Regional SharePoint 2nd Reading) Health Authority Professional Specific Advisory Council Chairs (HAPSAC) Health Authority Interprofessional Advisory Council Chairs (HAIAC) VCH Operations Directors VCH Professional Practice Directors **Final Sign Off:** Vice President, Professional Practice and Chief Clinical Information Officer, VCH
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