



Reimbursement of Standard Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) Information for patients

Introduction

Oral nutritional supplements (ONS) are specially-made food products. They contain energy, protein and other nutrients. They are usually intended for short-term use to treat malnutrition. They are typically used in addition to a normal diet, when diet alone does not meet daily nutritional requirements. The HSE has recommended a list of standard ONS to be used as first-line product choice (List A).

What reimbursement changes are being introduced for ONS?

From **1 July 2019**, there are changes to the way that some standard ONS are reimbursed on the medical card or drugs payment scheme card.

The HSE has compiled a second list of standard ONS (List B). From **1 July 2019**, if you are prescribed a standard ONS on List B, your GP, HSE dietitian or clinician must apply online for reimbursement approval of this product.

Reimbursement approval for ONS on List B is based on whether you have a clinical (medical) requirement for the product.

There is no change to reimbursement for ONS on List A (no online application is needed).

If an ONS on List B is approved for you, the pharmacy can dispense this product on your medical card or drugs payment scheme card. This ONS will be reimbursed for a period of up to six months from the date of approval.

If an ONS on List B is not approved, your doctor or dietitian can recommend an ONS from List A or they may appeal the reimbursement decision on your behalf.

Does my GP or dietitian know about these changes?

Yes. GPs and dietitians have been informed about the new reimbursement application system.

Why has the process changed?

The reimbursement process for ONS has changed in order to support appropriate prescribing of standard ONS.

ONS on List B (which require reimbursement approval) include some products which have the same nutritional value as List A ONS, but are more costly. List B also includes products which are intended for use in special circumstances only. The new online reimbursement application system will ensure these products are used only when there is a clinical need.

Where can I get more information on nutrition supports and ONS?

Please visit www.hse.ie/nutritionsupports for more information on nutrition supports and ONS.

The website offers resources, which should be used on the advice of your doctor or dietitian. Resources include:

- ***Making the most of every bite*** - a high-protein, high-calorie cookbook
- ***How to use oral nutritional supplements*** - a guide for patients, their carers and families

These are available to view or download.

What do the reimbursement changes mean for me?

For some people, there is no change at all.

If you have a repeat prescription for ONS written before **1 July 2019**, ask your pharmacist or GP if the changes apply to you. If the ONS prescribed for you requires reimbursement approval, your GP may change your prescription or arrange the application on your behalf.

What if I am under the care of a private dietitian?

A private registered dietitian can forward the relevant information to your GP. Your GP can then submit the application on your behalf. Only GPs, HSE dietitians and clinicians can use the online reimbursement system.