

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

memorandum

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR THE AGING
Bldg. 2, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223-0001



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Programs Affected: [] III-B [X] III-C-1 [X] III-C-2 [] III-D [X] SNAP [] CSE [] ELSEP [] EPIC [] RPE [] HEAP [] OTHER:	
Contact Person(s) - Phone Number(s) OSSD - Nutrition Unit-Albany-518-474-3585 NYC-212-804-1672	
For Your Information	
TAM Superseded by this document:	

TO: [X] AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTORS [X] NUTRITION PROGRAM DIRECTORS [X] CONSULTING DIETITIANS
Subject: Diet Order Requirements
Response Due Date:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Technical Assistance Memorandum (TAM) is to provide guidance to consulting dietitians and nutrition program staff concerning the requirements for diet prescriptions and to outline the procedures for informing physicians and participants of the types of diet modifications available. Attached is a sample Physician Diet Order which may be modified to meet your county's particular requirements.

BACKGROUND: Older Americans Act regulations and SOFA Nutrition Program Standards (90-PI-26, section IV.C.1.) require that "nutrition service providers provide menus where feasible and appropriate to meet the particular dietary needs and preferences arising from health and religious requirements or ethnic backgrounds of eligible individuals".

CURRENT PRACTICE: Counties receiving meals prepared by hospitals and nursing homes provide a selection of therapeutic diets. Most nutrition providers, however, can only offer a regular diet menu which is based on recommendations contained in the current Dietary Guidelines (Nutrition Standards, section IV.A.3.) and SOFA's Menu Planning Guidelines (89-TAM-7). Providers have implemented these guidelines in the following manner:

Regular Menu

- * Foods are prepared without added salt.
- * Frozen vegetables are used more frequently than canned.
- * High sodium and fat entrees are kept to a minimum.
- * Skim or low fat milk is offered.
- * Fresh fruits or unsweetened canned fruits or fruits packed in light syrup are frequently served for dessert.
- * High fiber breads and muffins are offered.

Nutrient analysis of the regular menu has confirmed that these changes have lowered the amount of sodium, cholesterol, fat and sugar contained in these meals. These reductions result in meals which meet the dietary requirements of the majority of participants and allow them to enjoy the regular diet without further modifications.

Modified Regular Menu

Ordinarily, only substitutions for high sodium foods and those high in concentrated carbohydrates are made.

"Special"/Therapeutic Diets

The terms "special diet" and therapeutic diet are often used interchangeably. The following diets are typical examples of "special" or therapeutic diets:

- * 2 grams sodium or less
- * 40 grams protein or less
- * 1200 Calories or less
- * 40 grams fat or less

Therapeutic diets, such as those above, will be made available only upon receipt of a physician's order and must be confirmed on an annual basis (Nutrition Standards, Section IV.C.1.c.). The initial diet order should be in writing and included in the participant's file or record. Subsequent confirmation can be in writing or by phone and documented in the clients record.

Diets below 1200 calories, protein below 40 grams, sodium restrictions below 2 grams or combinations of several restrictions are discouraged. They are not safe without continuous guidance by a registered dietitian and close medical supervision, neither of which is usually available. Instead, simple modifications of the regular menu are encouraged along with the necessary guidance by a registered dietitian as to what participants should be eating at home for the remainder of their meals.

DIET ORDER REQUIREMENTS: The diet order is a written or verbal confirmation that the type of meals and modifications being offered by the nutrition provider are acceptable to the physician and known to the participant. Refer to the Nutrition Standards, Section IV.C.1.b., "all participants and their physicians must be made aware of the type of menu modifications that are available".

*** The initial diet order is required of all participants who request or require modifications to the regular diet, e.g. therapeutic diets, the modified regular diet, pureed diets, etc. (It does not include individual food preferences).**

* The diet order should be initiated at the time a congregate participant is registered or when a homebound client begins meal service (for those clients expected to receive home delivered meals for more than two weeks).

* Those receiving a modified regular diet need only have an initial diet order. Only when there are changes in the original diet prescribed is it necessary to receive another diet order noting the change.

* Those receiving a therapeutic diet, as described above, must have their diet order confirmed annually.

Participants should be routinely screened to determine if a change in the diet order is necessary. They should be questioned about their dietary needs during the routine registration process for congregate participants and during reassessments of home bound clients. The program dietitian may request a diet order or revised diet order if, upon assessment, the client's current regular, modified regular or therapeutic diet order is not appropriate.

The diet order may include instructions or approval from the physician concerning nutrition counseling to be provided by a dietitian. Although this is not required by SOFA it may reduce some liability concerns.

The written diet order sent to physicians should describe the average caloric, sodium, cholesterol and fat content (if available from analysis) of the regular menu, the modified regular menu (those with substitutions) and/or any special or therapeutic diets available. The physician would then check the appropriate diet for your participant. See example attached.

PROVISION OF NUTRITION COUNSELING: Participants should have access to nutrition counseling and/or information provided by or under the direction of a registered dietitian, preferably in consultation with their physician.

Since most participants rely on the nutrition program for only part of their daily or weekly food intake, it is important to ensure that clients are knowledgeable about their diet and have the necessary support and resources to accommodate their nutritional needs for the balance of the day or week. Dietitians should instruct participants on how to plan their other meals around the meal(s) they receive from the program. Assistance with shopping, food preparation, reading food labels and accessing Food Stamp benefits are also important components to meet the nutritional needs of the participant and/or caregiver.

PHYSICIAN'S DIET ORDER

Patient/ Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

____ Will receive ____ home delivered meals, ____ days per week.

____ Will participate in the Congregate Dining Program

The _____ Nutrition Program provides meals which meet one-third the Recommended Dietary Allowances and follow the Dietary Guidelines. Our service is limited to the following types of diets. Please check all diets which are appropriate for your patient.

____ **REGULAR DIET** Meals average 600-800 Calories, 800-1200 mg sodium, 25-30 grams fat and 100mg cholesterol. Foods are prepared without added salt, frozen vegetables are used more frequently than canned, high sodium and fat entrees are kept to a minimum, skim or low fat milk is offered and fresh fruits or unsweetened or juice packed fruits are often served for dessert. High fiber breads and muffins are offered.

MODIFIED REGULAR DIETS

____ **Reduced Sodium** High sodium foods such as corned beef, smoked ham, processed meats, sauerkraut, etc. are omitted. The sodium content of the Regular menu is reduced to 600-900 mg per meal.

____ **Reduced Sugar** Foods on the Regular menu containing concentrated carbohydrates are omitted such as cakes, pies, puddings.

____ **Reduced Fat** High fat foods such as processed meats, ice cream, gravy, fried foods, desserts with a high fat content, etc. are omitted. The fat content of the Regular menu reduced to 20-25 grams per meal.

THERAPEUTIC DIETS

____ **2 GRAM SODIUM** _____ **1200 CALORIE** _____ **40 GRAM FAT**

____ **MODIFIED CONSISTENCY** Easy to chew and/or pureed foods on the Regular menu are provided.

It is the responsibility of the physician and/or participant to notify the program if a diet change is necessary. Our consultant Registered Dietitian is available to assist participants with their diet and how to plan their other meals around the meal(s) they receive from our program. Assistance with shopping, food preparation, reading food labels and accessing Food Stamp benefits are also provided.

____ Please check here if you wish your patient to be counseled by our dietitian. Note any special instructions here:

Physician's Signature _____ Date _____

For more information contact: _____ Phone: _____