

SNAPSHOT

NCP Step 4: Nutrition Monitoring and Evaluation

What is the purpose of nutrition monitoring and evaluation? The purpose is to determine the amount of progress made and whether goals/expected outcomes are being met. Nutrition monitoring and evaluation identifies patient/client* outcomes relevant to the nutrition diagnosis and intervention plans and goals. Nutrition care outcomes—the desired results of nutrition care—are defined in this step. The change in specific nutrition care indicators between assessment and reassessment can be measured and compared to the patient/client’s previous status, nutrition intervention goals, or reference standards. The aim is to promote more uniformity within the dietetics profession in assessing the effectiveness of nutrition intervention.

How does a food and nutrition professional determine what to measure for nutrition monitoring and evaluation?

Practitioners select nutrition care indicators that will reflect a change as a result of nutrition care. In addition, food and nutrition professionals will consider factors such as the nutrition diagnosis and its etiology and signs or symptoms, the nutrition intervention, medical diagnosis, health care outcome goals, quality management goals for nutrition, practice setting, patient/client population, and disease state and/or severity.

How are outcomes used in nutrition monitoring and evaluation organized? In four categories**:

| Food/Nutrition-Related History Outcomes | Anthropometric Measurement Outcomes | Biochemical Data, Medical Tests, and Procedure Outcomes | Nutrition-Focused Physical Finding Outcomes |
|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Food and nutrient intake, food and nutrient administration, medication/herbal supplement use, knowledge/beliefs, food and supplies availability, physical activity, nutrition quality of life</i> | <i>Height, weight, body mass index (BMI), growth pattern indices/percentile ranks, and weight history</i> | <i>Lab data (e.g., electrolytes, glucose) and tests (e.g., gastric emptying time, resting metabolic rate)</i> | <i>Physical appearance, muscle and fat wasting, swallow function, appetite, and affect</i> |

What does nutrition monitoring and evaluation involve? Practitioners do three things as part of nutrition monitoring and evaluation—monitor, measure, and evaluate the changes in nutrition care indicators—to determine patient/client progress. Practitioners monitor by providing evidence that the nutrition intervention is or is not changing the patient/client’s behavior or status. They measure outcomes by collecting data on the appropriate nutrition outcome indicator(s). Finally, food and nutrition professionals compare the current findings with previous status, nutrition intervention goals, and/or reference standards (i.e., criteria) and evaluate the overall impact of the nutrition intervention on the patient/client’s health outcomes. The use of standardized indicators and criteria increases the validity and reliability in how outcome data are collected. All these procedures facilitate electronic charting, coding, and outcomes measurement.

Critical thinking during this step...

- Selecting appropriate indicators/measures
- Using appropriate reference standards for comparison
- Defining where patient/client is in terms of expected outcomes
- Explaining a variance from expected outcomes
- Determining factors that help or hinder progress
- Deciding between discharge and continuation of nutrition care

Are food and nutrition professionals limited to the nutrition monitoring and evaluation outcomes terms? A cascade of outcomes of nutrition care have been identified; each outcome has several possible indicators that can be measured depending on the patient/client population, practice setting, and disease state/severity. Food and nutrition professionals can propose additions or revisions using the Procedure for Nutrition Controlled Vocabulary/Terminology Maintenance/Review available from the Academy.

Detailed information about this step can be found in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’s International Dietetics and Nutrition Terminology (IDNT) Reference Manual: Standardized Language for the Nutrition Care Process, Fourth Edition.

*Patient/client refers to individuals, groups, populations, family members, and/or caregivers.

**While the domains, classes, and terms for nutrition assessment and nutrition monitoring and evaluation are combined, there are no nutrition care outcomes associated with the domain entitled Client History. Items from this domain are used for nutrition assessment only and do not change as a result of nutrition intervention.