Snapshot

NCP Step 1: Nutrition Assessment

Purpose:
The purpose of nutrition assessment is to obtain, verify, and interpret data needed to identify nutrition-related problems, their causes, and significance. It is an ongoing, nonlinear and dynamic process that involves data collection and continual analysis of the patient/client's status compared to specified criteria. This contrasts with nutrition monitoring and evaluation where food and nutrition professionals use the same data to determine changes in patient/client* behavior, nutritional status, and the efficacy of nutrition intervention.

Finding nutrition assessment data:
For individuals, data can come directly from the patient/client through interview, observation and measurements, a medical record, and the referring health care provider. For population groups, data from surveys, administrative data sets, and epidemiological or research studies are used.

Terminology for nutrition assessment is organized in 5 domains (categories):

Food/Nutrition-Related History	Anthropometric Measurements	Biochemical Data, Medical Tests, and Procedures	Nutrition-Focused Physical Findings	Client History
Food and nutrient intake, food and nutrient administration, medication, complementary/alternative medicine use, knowledge/beliefs, food and supplies availability, physical activity, nutrition quality of life	*Height, weight, body mass index (BMI), growth pattern indices/percentile ranks, and weight history*	*Lab data (e.g., electrolytes, glucose) and tests (e.g., gastric emptying time, resting metabolic rate)*	*Physical appearance, muscle and fat wasting, swallow function, appetite, and affect*	*Personal history, medical/health/family history, treatments and complementary/alternative medicine use, and social history*

Use of nutrition assessment data:
Nutrition assessment data, or indicators, are compared to criteria, or relevant norms and standards. These norms and standards may be national, institutional, or regulatory. Nutrition assessment findings are then documented in nutrition diagnosis statements and nutrition intervention goal setting.

Critical thinking skills:

- Determining appropriate data to collect
- Determining the need for additional information
- Selecting assessment tools and procedures that match the situation
- Applying assessment tools in valid and reliable ways
- Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant data
- Distinguishing important from unimportant data
- Validating the data

Term selection and organization:
The taxonomy or classification system guides the food and nutrition professional to logical terminology selection. The terms for nutrition assessment and nutrition monitoring and evaluation are combined because the data points are the same or related; however, the data purpose and use are distinct in these two steps of the Nutrition Care Process.

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