



Ministry of Community and Social
Services

Ontario Disability Support Program
Ontario Works

Special Diet Allowance

Changes to the Special Diets Schedule Clarification to Approved Health Care Professionals

Effective January 25, 2013, Chronic Hepatitis C (Body Mass Index <25) has been added to the list of eligible medical conditions for which a Special Diet Allowance (SDA) may be provided. This means that an applicant who has been diagnosed with Chronic Hepatitis C, and who has a Body Mass Index (BMI) of less than 25 may be eligible to receive an SDA for this condition.

Rationale for BMI Limitation

The special diet is for protein and energy needs that may be higher for people with Chronic Hepatitis C. However, medical evidence shows that a high protein and energy diet could negatively impact Chronic Hepatitis C patients who are considered overweight or obese (i.e. have a BMI over 24.9) because being overweight is associated with fat in the liver. The increased risk of fat in the liver is associated with increased progression of fibrosis in the liver as well as decreased effectiveness of treatment of the Hepatitis C virus.

Instructions for Completing the Application Form

If the applicant has Chronic Hepatitis C (Body Mass Index <25) and would benefit from the dietary intervention in the form of a high protein, high energy diet, the approved health care professional must complete section 2 of the application form, as well as the corresponding application insert by: (1) checking the box; (2) indicating the length of time the special diet is required; and (3) initialing the insert. The applicant must remember to complete section 1 and sign section 4 of the application form and return it, along with the completed application insert.

As per current policy, identification of the Chronic Hepatitis C diagnosis should be documented in the patient's medical record. Additionally, the approved health care professional is required to document the patient's BMI to ensure it is within the limit.¹ Those patients with Chronic Hepatitis C who have a BMI over 24.9 will not qualify for a SDA.

(NOTE: This notice is intended for information purposes only – please do not use it for identifying an eligible condition or include it with the completed application)

¹ The SDA for Chronic Hepatitis C (BMI <25) cannot be indefinite because patients need to have their BMI reassessed to ensure it is within the limit.