

March is National Nutrition Month® - More than 16.8 million Americans, at least 65 years or older, are diagnosed with diabetes or renal disease. Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) that is provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional may result in improved diabetes and renal disease management, along with other health outcomes that may help delay these diseases. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that March is National Nutrition Month®. This campaign focuses on the importance of making informed food choices, developing sound eating and physical activity habits in order to promote a healthy lifestyle and improve good health.

Medicare Coverage:

Medicare provides MNT coverage for beneficiaries diagnosed with diabetes and/or renal disease (except for those receiving dialysis) and post renal transplant when referred by the treating physician and provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional. The treating physician must indicate a diagnosis of diabetes or renal disease, in order to receive this benefit.

Medicare provides coverage for 3 hours of MNT in the first year and 2 hours in subsequent years, and additional hours in certain situations.

NOTE: For the purpose of this benefit, renal disease means chronic renal insufficiency or the medical condition of a beneficiary who has been discharged from the hospital after a successful renal transplant for up to 36 months post transplant. Chronic renal insufficiency means a reduction in renal function not severe enough to require dialysis or transplantation [Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) 13-50 ml/min/1.73m²].

What Can You Do?

CMS needs your help to ensure that all eligible people with Medicare take full advantage of the MNT benefit. MNT provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional can be an integral component of diabetes and renal disease management, which may result in improved health outcomes and delay in disease progression. Talk with your eligible Medicare patients about the benefits of managing diabetes and renal disease through MNT. As the treating physician, provide a written referral and encourage them to make an appointment with a registered dietitian or nutrition professional.

For More Information:

- Diabetes-Related Services Brochure - This resource provides health care professionals with an overview of Medicare's coverage of diabetes screening tests, diabetes self-management training, MNT, and supplies and other diabetes-related services.
<http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/DiabetesSvcs.pdf>
- The CMS MNT Website – Provides health care professionals with information about Medicare coverage of MNT provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional.
<http://www.cms.gov/MedicalNutritionTherapy/>
- The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals – This comprehensive resource provides coverage and coding information on the array of preventive services and screenings that Medicare covers, including MNT and other services for Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes.
http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf
- National Nutrition Month® – Visit the American Dietetic Association's website at <http://www.eatright.org/nnm/> to learn more about National Nutrition Month.

Thank you.