



Special Diet Allowance

Updating the Special Diets Schedule Clarification to Approved Health Care Professionals

Effective Dec 1, 2014, the following three conditions will be added to the list of eligible medical conditions for which a Special Diet Allowance (SDA) may be provided:

1. Congenital heart defect – Have had: a Ross procedure or an arterial switch procedure or coexisting coarctation of the aorta
2. unintended weight loss due to Interferon treatment of Hepatitis C (Body Mass Index [BMI] <25), and
3. Rett Syndrome (BMI <18.5).

Congenital heart defect – Have had: a Ross procedure or an arterial switch procedure or coexisting coarctation of the aorta:

If an applicant has been diagnosed with a congenital heart defect and has had a Ross procedure or an arterial switch procedure or coexisting coarctation of the aorta, he or she may be eligible to receive an SDA.

Unintended weight loss due to Interferon treatment of Hepatitis C (BMI <25):

If an applicant is undergoing Interferon treatment for Hepatitis C, has a BMI of less than 25, and is experiencing unintended weight loss under one of the following two categories listed below, he or she may be eligible to receive an SDA:

- > 5% and ≤ 10% of usual body weight
- > 10% of usual body weight

Rationale for BMI Limitation:

The special diet is for additional nutritional needs for people with Hepatitis C who are undergoing Interferon treatment. 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.

Rett Syndrome (BMI <18.5):

If an applicant has been diagnosed with Rett Syndrome and has a BMI of less than 18.5, he or she may be eligible to receive an SDA.

Rationale for BMI Limitation:

The special diet is for protein and energy needs that may be higher for people with Rett Syndrome, who may be experiencing difficulty maintaining a normal weight (are underweight).

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A BMI limit of 18.5 ensures that the special diet benefits those with Rett Syndrome who need it most – patients who are below the normal BMI range.

Instructions for Completing the Application Form

If the applicant has **Congenital heart defect and has had a Ross procedure or an arterial switch procedure or coexisting coarctation of the aorta**, the approved health care provider must complete section 2 of the application form, as well as the corresponding section of the 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 **Congenital heart defect with a Ross procedure or an arterial switch procedure or coexisting coarctation of the aorta** diagnosis should be documented in the patient's medical record.

If the applicant has experienced **unintended weight loss due to Interferon treatment of Hepatitis C (BMI <25)**, the approved health care provider must check the corresponding unintended weight loss category in the appropriate section on page 3 of the application.

The length of time the special diet is required must also be indicated and initialed by the approved health care professional. 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 unintended weight loss due to Interferon treatment of Hepatitis C (BMI <25), should be documented in the patient's medical record. The approved health care professional is also required to document the patient's BMI to ensure it is below 25.

If the applicant has **Rett Syndrome (BMI <18.5)**, the approved health care provider must complete section 2 of the application form, as well as the corresponding section of the 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 Rett Syndrome (BMI <18.5), should be documented in the patient's medical record.

The approved health care professional is required to document the patient's BMI to ensure it is below 18.5.¹

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 Rett Syndrome (BMI <18.5) cannot be indefinite because patients need to have their BMI reassessed to ensure it is within the limit.