
PENG introduction to the Risk Assessment Template for Enteral Tube Administration of Liquidised Diet

Generally, the promotion of liquidised meals for all patients would be considered a retrograde step and not a practice advocated by the Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Group (PENG) of the BDA. This mode of feeding is not considered a routine alternative to available prescribed formula.

As a representative group of specialist nutrition support dietitians we would endorse best practice and advocate the use of licensed, evidence-based prescribed formulations for tube fed patients.

These products allow the estimation of nutritional requirements to translate to a prescribed volume of ACBS formulation deemed safe to utilise as a sole source of nutrition.

PENG appreciate that members have been requested to provide dietetic expertise to develop feeding regimens to guide patients and carers who wish to administer liquidised diet or fluids out with of best practice guidance.

The risk assessment tool has been developed to provide members safe practice guidance and points of risk to consider when providing a duty of care to a patient or carer who wish to pursue this mode of feed delivery.

Consideration has been given to the stance of UK device manufacturers, as outlined in the enteral plastic safety group statement.

The risk assessment tool is based on the National Patient Safety Association (NPSA) guidance document 'Risk assessment programme: Practice-based commissioning: commissioning for patient safety', Nov 2006.

Whilst we recognise that risk assessments are subjective, it is vital to focus on the best interests of the patient rather than personal bias. It is recommended to carry out risk assessment and agree risk score within a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) setting. We hope the tool will provide guidance and a starting point. Each practitioner must follow local risk assessment policy and the documentation specific to the individual employer. It is also advisable to liaise with the local risk management team for additional support.

A further supporting document is the Enteral Plastic Safety Group (EPSG) statement.

Future plans

We would welcome feedback and critique of the risk assessment tool from nutrition support dietitians using the template or extracts of it in practice. We plan to collaborate with BAPEN in the development of a decision tree specific to the practice. We are working with members of the paediatric group on the BDA directed professional practice statement.

NB: should you have any queries or comments on any of the content please email PENG: peng@bda.uk.com