

Specific oral nutritional supplements (ONS) product reviews

Practices are asked to identify patients prescribed specific ONS products, update their recorded weight, height and MUST (malnutrition universal screening tool) score, and switch to a nutritionally equivalent, more cost-effective ONS.

Background

ONS prescriptions are often continued following discharge from dietetic outpatients, or from the acute setting. The recommendation is that all patients are reviewed on discharge and ONS stopped or switched to a formulary alternative ([6 steps to appropriate prescribing of ONS for adults 2025](#))

This review aims to identify patients that have:

- continued specialist-only ONS post discharge from the acute setting
- started on specialist-only ONS by a dietitian and since been discharged
- started on a specialist-only ONS in primary care

Switching to a nutritionally equivalent, cost-effective alternative product is recommended where appropriate.

Up to date anthropometry (measurements of the body) and MUST score provides information to help review ONS. This should be updated regularly to help ascertain if patients are making progress towards goals and ONS treatment can be stopped. This is requested as part of this review and will help to assess if a patient can have their ONS stopped rather than switching to an equivalent product.

Actions

1. Identify patients prescribed specific ONS. Pre-built searches for EMIS and SystmOne are available on the Cornwall formulary
2. Update patient's anthropometry (height, recent weight and BMI, calculate MUST). This may require contacting the patient or care home for an up to date weight
3. If MUST = 0 consider if ONS prescription still indicated. Please note in some cases ONS may be prescribed for reasons other than disease-related malnutrition. If still indicated, please explain rationale, considering [ACBS criteria](#) for ONS prescribing. If ONS are no longer required, please see food first resources on the formulary and ensure there is a plan for monitoring.

4. If ONS still indicated, switch to nutritionally equivalent alternative (list below) unless valid clinical reason not to do so
5. Complete and return the Microsoft Form [Oral Nutritional Supplements \(ONS\) - PMOS 2026-27](#) for each patient

Please note, due to the specific nature of this review, practices may not have sufficient patients to reach the cap. In this instance we would encourage practices to contact the team to identify additional patient cohorts.

Search 1: 1.5 kcal/ml milkshake ONS

This search identifies 5 ONS products that are either specialist-only or non-formulary and the recommended switch to a second-line product.

All switches are nutritionally equivalent, except Ensure liquid and Fresubin Original drink which are non-formulary. The closest formulary equivalent is Altraplen Energy.

ONS	Presentation	Price	Switch to	Presentation	Price	Saving/month (based on OD)	Saving/month (based on BD)
Ensure Plus Milkshake	200ml	£1.58	Altraplen Energy	200ml	99p	£16.52	£33.04
Fortisip Bottle	200ml	£1.50				£14.28	£28.56
Fresubin Energy Drink	200ml	£1.50				£14.28	£28.56
Fresubin Original Drink	200ml	£3.45				£68.88	£137.76
Ensure liquid	200ml* / 250ml	£3.11 / £3.56				£59.36/ £71.96	£118.72/ £143.92

*From August 2026 Ensure liquid will be changing from a 250ml to a 200ml bottle

Search 2: 2.4kcal/ml compact style milkshake ONS

Please do not switch patients on one 125ml bottle/day, as Altraplen Compact Daily is equivalent to 2 x 125ml compacts.

ONS	Presentation	Price	Switch to	Presentation	Price	Saving/month (based on OD)	Saving/month (based on BD)
Ensure Compact	125ml	£1.60	Altraplen Compact Daily **	250ml	£1.60* (80p / 125ml)	N/A	£44.80
Fortisip Compact	125ml	£1.60				N/A	£44.80
Altraplen Compact	125ml	£1.60				N/A	£44.80

**Altraplen Compact Daily is 250ml so equivalent of 2 x 125ml Compacts. Please make sure patients dose is adjusted accordingly.

Search 3: 2.4kcal/ml compact, high protein milkshake

ONS	Presentation	Price	Switch to	Presentation	Price	Saving/month (based on OD)	Saving/month (based on BD)
Fortisip Compact Protein	125ml	£2.70	Fresubin Pro Compact Drink	125ml	£1.69	£28.28	£56.56

Recommendation

- ONS prescriptions should be reviewed regularly. The [6 steps to appropriate prescribing of ONS for adults 2025](#) can be used to support reviews.

Patients to be excluded

Exclude any of the following patients:

- Under 18 years old
 - Diagnosed with an eating disorder
 - Under current review by dietitian (including patients under long-term review by a dietitian, for example, renal dialysis, oncology, learning disabilities, cystic fibrosis).
- Do not exclude patients who have been discharged from the dietetic service, but if a clear plan is provided for continuing, monitoring, and reviewing the ONS prescription, please take this into account.

Please use your professional judgement to determine whether an individual's circumstances mean that completing a MUST screen and / or switching ONS would not be appropriate, for example, at end of life, or if recommended thickened fluids of a specific IDDSI level for dysphagia.

References and resources

- [6 steps to appropriate prescribing of ONS for adults 2025](#)
- [NICE guidance, CG32, nutritional support for adults](#)
- [MUST tool](#)
- [Online MUST calculator](#)
- [MUST explanatory booklet](#)

Version number	Revision date	Revision by	Nature of revisions
Version 2	05.05.2026	Prescribing Support Dietitian	Actions, exclusion criteria, updated ONS prices and flavours appended.
Version 3	28.08.2026	Prescribing Support Dietitian	Actions, patients to be excluded, change to size and price of Ensure liquid.

Appendix 1

Flavours available for each ONS

Search 1

ONS	Flavours available
Altraplen Energy	Banana, Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla
Ensure Plus milkshake	Banana, Chocolate, Coffee, Fruits of the Forest, Neutral, Peach, Strawberry, Vanilla
Fortisip Bottle	Banana, Chocolate, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla
Fresubin Energy Drink	Banana, Blackcurrant, Cappuccino, Chocolate, Lemon (to be discontinued), Neutral, Strawberry, Tropical Fruits, Vanilla
Fresubin Original Drink	Vanilla
Ensure liquid	Chocolate, Vanilla

Search 2

ONS	Flavours available
Altraplen Compact Daily	Banana, Hazel Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla
Ensure Compact	Banana, Café latte, Strawberry, Vanilla
Fortisip Compact	Banana, Chocolate, Mocha, Neutral, Strawberry, Vanilla
Altraplen Compact	Banana, Hazel Chocolate, Strawberry, Vanilla

Search 3

ONS	Flavours available
Fresubin Pro Compact Drink	Apricot-Peach, Cappuccino, Hazelnut, Neutral, Vanilla
Fortisip Compact Protein	Banana, Berries, Cool Red Fruits, Hot Tropical Ginger, Mocha, Neutral, Peach & Mango, Strawberry, Vanilla