

## Information for Your Doctor

Starting a weight management program is a step toward improved health. Even small weight losses can have significant health benefits. However, because changing your diet can affect some medical conditions or interact with some medications, we would like you to *share this information with your doctor before you begin.*

### What is Nutrisystem?

In short, Nutrisystem® programs provide portion-controlled, low calorie entrées and snacks, which customers supplement with grocery items (e.g., vegetables, fruit, dairy) to achieve a low glycemic-index diet of about 1250-1500 calories per day. This calorie level should induce a weight loss of 1-2 lb per week. Nutrisystem programs meet national recommendations for general adult nutrition as specified in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. All programs (including the recommended grocery additions) contain < 2300 mg of sodium per day and can be customized down to 1500 mg/day through consultation with our Dietary Services department. For most customers, following a Nutrisystem program means that the quality of their diet will improve significantly, while their total calories are reduced.

### What Conditions or Medications Might be Affected by a Change in Diet?

Although we do not consider these conditions to be contraindications to using Nutrisystem, we would like to raise the following for your consideration.

#### **Diabetes**

*Individuals who use insulin will require a reduction to avoid hypoglycemia. Other diabetes medications may also require adjustment.* We recommend that all appropriate medication adjustments are made early in the patient's weight loss attempt. If you would like to see the insulin reduction algorithm developed by our medical advisor, please contact [research@nutrisystem.com](mailto:research@nutrisystem.com).

#### **Anemia**

Nutrisystem programs provide 90-100% of the RDI of iron for women and men. Iron supplementation is recommended.

#### **Anticoagulant Medications (e.g., Coumadin)**

Many customers significantly increase their intake of vegetables when they follow a Nutrisystem program. *The action of warfarin or other anticoagulant medications may be affected by an increase in vitamin K in the diet.*

#### **Cancer**

Intentional weight loss may not be appropriate if cancer is active. Treatment may affect appetite and food tolerance. For patients with a history of estrogen positive tumors, the diet can be customized to limit the amount of soy if required.

#### **Congestive Heart Failure or Ischemic Heart Disease**

Sodium restrictions may be required (your patient may contact our Dietary Services department for assistance in adjusting the meal plan). Several medications used to treat this condition may interact with a change in diet. Patients who wish to increase physical activity should have medical clearance.

#### **Epilepsy (Seizure disorder)**

Levels of phenytoin, phenobarbital, carbamazepine may vary with diet changes. Folate, B12, and vitamin C supplementation are recommended for patients taking phenytoin or phenobarbital. Vitamin D is recommended for patient taking carbamazepine or valproic acid. High doses of B6 can decrease seizure threshold and should be avoided. Psyllium and ginseng interact with valproic acid and lithium. *Patients who require a ketogenic diet should NOT use Nutrisystem.*

#### **Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Achalasia, Gastroparesis, Pyloric Stenosis, and History of Bowel Diversion Surgery**

Digestive tract disorders may be aggravated by dietary changes (especially changes in dietary fiber intake) and/or require specific dietary restrictions. Diarrhea or constipation may affect vitamin absorption.

### **HIV**

Several medications used to treat this condition may interact with a change in diet.

### **Hyperthyroidism**

Patients with active hyperthyroidism are likely to have increased calorie needs. The calorie level of Nutrisystem programs may induce larger than recommended weight losses.

### **Lithium**

Consistent sodium intake is important as variances can alter therapeutic levels. Lithium interacts with psyllium and ginseng.

### **Sarcoidosis**

Vitamin D and calcium intake may need to be adjusted down. Sodium may need to be restricted below 2000 mg/day if patient is treated with corticosteroids (the customer may contact our Dietary Services department for assistance in adjusting the meal plan).

### **Theophylline (Theo-Dur, Uniphyll)**

Consistent intake of protein and carbohydrate is necessary for consistent drug levels. Changes in caffeine intake should be avoided.

### **Tuberculosis**

Isoniazid therapy (INH) requires B6 supplementation. Niacin, calcium, and B12 can be depleted.

## **What Conditions or Medications Require a Physician's Approval before a Patient Can Use Nutrisystem?**

### **History of Kidney Transplantation**

Patients must be at least 5 years status post kidney transplantation and must have written approval from his/her nephrologist.

### **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs) or Other Tyramine-Sensitive Medications**

Tyramine is present in some Nutrisystem foods and may interact with these medications to cause dangerously high blood pressure.

### **Levodopa**

Dietary protein can reduce the absorption of this medication.

### **Weight > 400 lb (Women) or > 450 lb (Men)**

Customers above these weights must have their meal plans adjusted to reflect their greater calorie requirements. Due to greater morbidity associated with extreme obesity, Nutrisystem believes it is prudent for patients above these weights to be monitored by their physician during weight loss.

## **What Conditions Are Contraindications to Using Nutrisystem?**

### **Age < 18 years**

### **Allergies to Peanuts, Soy, or Latex (used in food handling)**

### **Anorexia or Bulimia Nervosa (Presence or recent history)**

### **Body Mass Index < 19 kg/m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Conditions Requiring a Ketogenic Diet (e.g., Severe Epilepsy)**

### **Kidney Disease/Insufficiency/Failure**

### **Nursing an Infant < 6 Months Old or Who Has Not Yet Started Solid Foods**

### **Pregnancy**

If you would like more detailed information about the Nutrisystem programs (including nutritional profile and clinical trial results), please visit our health care provider site at <http://www.nutrisystem.com/hcp>. Also feel free to contact one of our dietitians directly at [dietitian@nutrisystem.com](mailto:dietitian@nutrisystem.com).