

Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)
Special Diet Allowance Information Bulletin:
Unintended Weight Loss Eligibility Clarification

BACKGROUND

The new Special Diet Allowance (SDA) came into effect on April 1, 2011. The key changes included:

- the removal of several medical conditions from the schedule;
- adjustments in the amounts paid per medical condition;
- the removal of payment for multiple medical conditions that require the same diet; and
- a revised application form.

All current SDA recipients must apply for the new program between April 1, 2011 and July 31, 2011 in order to avoid any payment interruption.

No SDA payments will be made under the previous schedule after July 31, 2011, even where a person's previous SDA was prescribed on an indefinite basis.

There have been concerns raised about the application process for the new SDA and its potentially negative impact on previous SDA recipients with unintended weight loss.

To ensure consistency across the program, MCSS is providing this clarification to health professionals and key stakeholders about the unintended weight loss eligibility criteria.

CLARIFICATION

Question: Is an SDA recipient with unintended weight loss/body wasting under the previous schedule eligible to receive the new SDA if their weight is currently above the >5% weight loss threshold?

Answer: Yes, under the following conditions:

Patients with documented unintended weight loss/body wasting due to an eligible medical condition and who have successfully regained weight at the time of application for the new Special Diets Schedule, will qualify for the new SDA so long as the health professional can attest to **each** of the following:

1. the diagnosis of an eligible medical condition that is listed on the new Special Diets Schedule for unintended weight loss/body wasting;
2. unintended weight loss/body wasting of at least >5%, past or present, is due to the eligible medical condition diagnosed in step (1); and
3. a medical opinion that a special diet is necessary to maintain body weight.