

## **Nutrition Therapy for Crohn's Disease**

### **What is nutrition therapy?**

Your child's doctor recommends nutrition therapy to help your child. Nutrition therapy means your child will stop eating foods and change to a formula. This usually lasts about 12 weeks. It may be used with or instead of other medicines to control Crohn's disease. A dietitian will work with your family.

Your child will not be allowed to eat most foods during nutrition therapy. Talk to the doctor and dietitian about what foods are allowed. For many patients, the only foods and drinks allowed are:

- The formula prescribed by the doctor and dietitian.
- Water.
- Sugar-free flavored water.
- Clear hard candy.

### **How long does nutrition therapy last?**

You will see the doctor about one month after starting nutrition therapy. At this visit, we will check your child's weight and how your child is feeling. Sometimes, symptoms don't improve with nutrition therapy. If your child's symptoms don't improve after 4 weeks, the doctor will decide if the therapy should be stopped. Don't stop nutrition therapy without talking to the GI doctor or nurse first.

Some families use nutrition therapy during a Crohn's Disease flare up. Ask your child's doctor if this is a good option for your child.

### **What type of formula should my child drink?**

Your child's dietitian will recommend the appropriate type and amount of formula. These formulas come in a variety of flavors. Some formula options include:

- Ensure®
- Ensure Plus®
- Boost®
- Boost Plus®

## How do we get the formula?

- You can buy these formulas at many drug stores and grocery stores.
- Contact your insurance company to see if they will help pay for it.
- You may be able to use your flex spending account money to buy it.
- If your insurance company does not cover the formula, it will cost between \$10 and \$20 per day. It will depend on the amount your child needs.

## What if my child can't drink the formula?

Some children have a hard time drinking the formula by mouth. These children may have a nasogastric (NG) tube placed. An NG tube is a small plastic tube that goes through the nose and into the stomach. The formula can be fed to your child through the NG tube. Some parents place the NG tube each night and remove it each morning. Ask the GI doctor or nurse if an NG tube is right for your child.

## What happens after nutrition therapy?

At the end of nutrition therapy, other food will be slowly added to your child's diet. Your child will start out by eating one meal per day. Every few days, another meal will be added. Your child will slowly drink less formula and eat more food until they are taking only food.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.