

Nutrition and Hydration Policy Template

Purpose:

To maintain and promote the nutritional and hydration needs of all residents through evidence-based care, ongoing monitoring, and consumer involvement, ensuring compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards, particularly Standard 6: Food and Nutrition, and other relevant legislation.

Scope:

Applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and allied health professionals involved in meal planning, preparation, service, assessment, and monitoring of residents' nutrition and hydration within the organisation.

Policy Statement:

The organisation will:

- Provide residents with safe, nutritious, and appetising food and drinks that meet their individual needs and preferences.
- Monitor nutritional intake and hydration to prevent malnutrition, dehydration, or weight loss.
- Engage residents in planning menus and evaluating dining experiences.
- Ensure compliance with dietary and clinical recommendations.
- Promote dignity, choice, and independence in mealtime support.

Legislative Context:

- Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth)
- Quality of Care Principles 2014
- Aged Care Quality Standards (Standard 6 – Food and Nutrition; Standard 3 – The Care & Service)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Australian Dietary Guidelines and Food Standards Code
- Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)

Definitions:

- **Nutrition:** Intake of food necessary for health and energy.
- **Hydration:** Adequate fluid intake to maintain physical and cognitive function.
- **Malnutrition:** Deficiency or imbalance in energy, protein, and nutrients causing adverse health effects.
- **Dysphagia:** Difficulty with swallowing requiring texture-modified diets and increased supervision.

Key Principles:

1. Every resident's nutrition and hydration needs are assessed on admission and reviewed regularly.
2. Mealtimes respect residents' dignity, independence, and preferences.
3. Food is safe, appealing, and meets cultural, medical, and religious requirements.
4. Residents and families are engaged in menu planning and feedback processes.
5. Special dietary needs are managed under clinical guidance of dietitians and speech pathologists.
6. Staff receive regular training in food safety, nutrition awareness, and hydration support.

Responsibilities:

- **Approved Provider / Board:** Ensure adequate resources and compliance with food and nutrition standards.
- **Facility Manager:** Implement nutrition and hydration programs and monitor outcomes.
- **Dietitian / Speech Pathologist:** Provide assessments, guidance, and menu development.
- **Chefs / Kitchen Staff:** Prepare meals safely according to dietary requirements and food safety standards.
- **Clinical Care Staff:** Monitor intake, record consumption, and report changes in condition.
- **Support Staff:** Facilitate positive and dignified mealtime experiences.

Procedures:

1. Conduct a nutrition and hydration assessment for each resident upon admission and update quarterly or as conditions change.
2. Develop person-centred meal plans aligned with clinical and personal preferences.
3. Record daily fluid and food intake for residents identified at risk of malnutrition or dehydration.
4. Provide texture-modified diets as clinically indicated and prepared per dietitian recommendations.
5. Encourage resident choice in food, meal times, and portion sizes to support autonomy.
6. Ensure safe food handling and temperature control in line with HACCP and Food Safety standards.
7. Escalate any nutritional risk indicators such as unplanned weight loss or reduced fluid intake.
8. Report, review, and respond to any food-related incidents or risks under SIRS.

Monitoring and Review:

- Regular audits of kitchen hygiene, menu compliance, and meal satisfaction.
- Monthly review of resident weight, hydration, and dietary changes.
- Annual review of this policy, incorporating dietitian feedback and resident satisfaction results.

Associated Policies:

- Food Safety and Hygiene Policy
- Falls Prevention and Management Policy
- Clinical Governance Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practices Policy

Evidence and Records:

- Nutrition and hydration assessments

- Weight and BMI logs
- Food and fluid intake charts
- Dietitian reports and menu approval documentation
- Staff training and competency records

Policy Control:

Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Policy Owner	Approved By	Status
1.0	20 January 2026	20 January 2027	Quality & Compliance Manager	Approved Provider Board	Draft

Compliance Summary:

Entity Type	Entity Name	Completion Rate	Status
Policy	Nutrition and Hydration Policy	100%	FULLY COMPLIANT (100%)