

Snapshot

NCP Step 1: Nutrition Assessment

Purpose:

Nutrition Assessment is a systematic approach to collect, classify, and synthesize important and relevant data needed to identify nutrition-related problems and their causes. This step also includes reassessment for comparing and re-evaluating data from the previous interaction to the next and collection of new data that may lead to new or revised nutrition diagnoses based on the client's status or situation. It is an ongoing, dynamic process that involves initial data collection and continual reassessment and analysis of the client's* status compared to accepted standards, recommendations, and/or goals. This contrasts with nutrition monitoring and evaluation where nutrition and dietetics practitioners use the same data to determine changes in client behavior, nutritional status, and the efficacy of nutrition intervention.

Finding Nutrition Assessment Data:

For individuals, data can come directly from the patient/client through interview, observation and measurements, a health record, and the referring health care provider. For population groups, data from surveys, administrative data sets, and epidemiological or research studies are used.

Terminology for nutrition assessment is organized in five domains (categories):

Food/Nutrition-Related History	Anthropometric Measurements	Biochemical Data, Medical Tests, and Procedures	Nutrition-Focused Physical Findings	Client History
<i>Food and nutrient intake, food and nutrient administration, medication, complementary/alternative medicine use, knowledge/beliefs, food and supplies availability, physical activity, nutrition quality of life</i>	<i>Height, weight, body mass index (BMI), growth pattern indices/percentile ranks, and weight history</i>	<i>Lab data (e.g., electrolytes, glucose) and tests (eg, gastric emptying time, resting metabolic rate)</i>	<i>Physical appearance, muscle and fat wasting, swallow function, appetite, and affect</i>	<i>Personal history, medical/health/family history, treatments and complementary/alternative medicine use, and social history</i>

Use of Nutrition Assessment Data:

Nutrition assessment data, or indicators, are compared to reference standards, recommendations, or goals. These norms and standards may be national, institutional, or regulatory. Nutrition assessment findings are then communicated in nutrition diagnosis (problem) statements and nutrition intervention goal setting.

Critical thinking skills:

- Determining important and relevant data to collect
- Determining the need for additional information
- Selecting assessment tools and procedures that match the situation
- Applying assessment tools in valid and reliable ways
- Validating the data

Term selection and Organization:

The taxonomy or classification system guides the nutrition and dietetics practitioner to logical terminology selection. The terms for Nutrition Assessment and Nutrition Monitoring and Evaluation are combined because the data points are the same or related; however, the data purpose and use are distinct in these two steps of the Nutrition Care Process.

*Client refers to individuals, groups, populations, supportive individuals, and structures.