



Healthcare professional guide: Weighing scales and weighing patients

Recent audits of GP practice notes have shown that very few patients for whom sip feeds are prescribed have weights recorded either prior to or during prescription.

Weighing is essential:

- for identifying malnutrition
- when considering sip feed prescription
- for review of existing sip feed prescription – see [Healthcare professional guide: Malnutrition and sip feeds in primary care](#)

Patient groups who are likely to be at risk of malnutrition include:

- Frail elderly
- Care home residents (Care Homes should weigh all residents at least monthly)
- Those with cancer cachexia
- Those with advanced long term conditions which are associated with malnutrition such as:
 - COPD
 - Parkinson's disease
 - Dementia
 - Progressive neurological diseases such as MND, MS etc

➔ Requirements for weighing scales used in healthcare settings

All scales used in healthcare settings (GP practice, community settings, care homes) should conform to the following:

- Class III
- Display metric units only
- Calibrated at least annually by a suitably qualified weighing engineer

Which scales should be available:

GP practices

It is good practice to have:

- One set of stand on scales (meeting the above standards) in each consulting room (including those used by healthcare professionals other than GPs)
- One set of chair scales or wheelchair scales within the practice especially if the practice is large and/or has a high proportion of free living elderly patients

Community teams

- At least one set of portable (battery powered), lightweight, stand on scales per team (lightweight scales usually weigh approx. 3kg)

Care Homes

- Residential Homes should have stand on scales **and** chair or wheelchair scales
- Nursing Homes should have chair or wheelchair scales **and** hoist scales

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