

Sip feeds review in Stockport

In August 2010 the NHS Stockport Board approved a review into the prescribing of Sip feeds.

Sip feeds are an option for people who are not able to get full nutrition from a normal diet. They are ready made liquid nutritional supplements that can benefit underweight patients suffering from chronic conditions. Adapting ordinary food to meet the patient's nutritional requirements should be considered first and it is recommended that the use of usual food should be maintained for as long as possible. Some people are unable to take food orally and have a tube (PEG tube). The review in no way affects this group of people.

The aim of the review was to focus the use of sip feeds on patients that are vulnerable and clinically in need of sip feeds and in the process reduce the overuse and escalating spend on sip feeds. This will ensure that Stockport health services continue to have sufficient funds to prescribe for patients who are medically vulnerable and unable to eat a normal diet

Approx £650,000 is currently spent on sip feeds every year in Stockport. This is high and continues to rise. Sip feeds is an area where overuse of the system has resulted in unnecessary expenditure.

The review of Sip feeds has been led by a group of prescribing advisers, dieticians, district nurses and managers. It has also had input from GPs, pharmacists, social services, and the communications/patient engagement leads.

The group has produced a revised set of guidelines for doctors on the prescribing of sip feeds. The revised guidelines include the monthly monitoring of patients for improvement and strict criteria for prescribing sip feeds.

From mid November, patients will be reviewed and if they don't fit the criteria they will be encouraged to take a modified diet. A patient information leaflet will be provided which includes dietary advice and menus. Also, if the patient wishes to they can purchase the feeds from pharmacies.