

For Providers

What is the referral process?

Team members including primary care providers, other medical/educational specialists, or CIS-Early Intervention service providers are encouraged to submit a referral to CSHN in order to find a dietitian in the network to provide direct service with the family & receive technical assistance from the statewide nutrition consultants.

Anyone can refer a family to a local pediatric nutritionist of their choosing in the CSHN Community Nutrition Network.

- 1 Discuss the referral with the family and obtain their informed consent.
- 2 Complete referral form or see brochure back for contact info. ([Click here for link](#))
- 3 The Nutrition Consultant is available to discuss further information before calling the family or referring to a local RD for direct services. If the home visit or telemedicine consult is to be combined with a visit with another provider this will be coordinated by the Nutrition Consultant.
- 4 After the assessment is completed you will receive a copy of the report.
- 5 Follow-up visits are available, as determined in collaboration between the family and RD.

Who pays?

Direct medical nutrition therapy counseling and consulting services are billed to Medicaid and other third party insurance providers. Nutrition consulting services and technical assistance to nutritionists in the CSHN Nutrition Network, providers, school & daycare teams, EI service providers, and others is provided through the VT Department of Health CSHN Nutrition Program.



Children with Special Health Needs

Community Nutrition Network

State wide Nutrition Consultant support provided by:

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Vermont Department of Health Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN)



Community Nutrition Network

Individualized nutrition services for children who have special growth, feeding and dietary needs and their families. Expertly trained Registered Dietitians (RD) serving all regions of Vermont.

Common Questions for Families & Providers about CSHN Nutrition:

1

Why is nutrition important for a child's growth and development?

- ➔ Nutrients and calories are needed for brain, muscle, and body growth.
- ➔ Feeding helps in the development of a child's oral muscles needed for speech.
- ➔ Feeding and eating is a time for social development.
- ➔ Good nutrition plays a role in preventing illness.

2

Why is nutrition important to consider?

A child who is hungry is irritable and less willing to interact and socialize. Parents can become frustrated, as do teachers and therapists when working with an undernourished child, because the child does not feel well. Hard to feed children can ignore hunger cues, grow slowly and are more prone to infections and illnesses. If they are sick more frequently then they are not able to participate fully in therapies and social and educational activities.

3

Who are CSHN Community Nutrition Consultants?

All the CSHN Community Nutrition Consultants are Registered Dietitians (RDs)

and have experience in working with children with special health needs. The CSHN Community Nutrition Program provides local nutrition team members with ongoing training as well as consultation on a regular or as needed basis.

4

What do Nutritionists do as part of the team?

A nutritionist assesses the growth, adequacy of the current diet, and feeding skill development of a child. An evaluation results in specific recommendations for feeding the child at an appropriate developmental level at home or in a program or school, to meet the child's biological needs for growth. The nutritionist will also help the family identify local food and nutrition resources they may be eligible for in their community.

5

What do Nutritionists do that is not already being done by my child's team?

The nutritionist knows what foods to recommend in order to meet the child's nutritional needs for growth and good health. Nutritionists also review other feeding and behavioral issues to determine if these issues are impacting the child's growth and nutritional status. The nutritionist can assist in developing nutrition-related outcomes and strategies for the child's IEP or One Plan. They work with the other members of the team in assisting the family and child in developing feeding skills.

6

Are children with special health care needs different in their nutrition needs?

Children with special health care needs are not different than other children, but there is a wider degree of variation in how much they need to eat. Some children have a different body composition, with different proportions of body fat and muscle. This changes how they grow in adding both weight and height. Parents of children who have problems growing and eating often feel they are not competent parents, and need support to gain confidence. The nutritionist can help the family understand their child's unique nutritional needs so the child can grow to their greatest potential.

7

What are the most common problems that Nutritionists work on?

The CSHN Nutritionists work with families whose children may:

- ➔ Have difficulty gaining weight
- ➔ Are overweight for how tall they are
- ➔ Eat only a limited variety of foods
- ➔ Have problems with digestion
- ➔ Have challenges with feeding and eating
- ➔ Cannot safely eat by mouth
- ➔ Have diagnoses that change their needs for specific nutrients