

How can I get a more nutritious diet while on income assistance?

You may be able to get more money for food under the **special diet provision** of the income assistance regulations.

Different amounts are given for different diets and **you can ask for more than one special diet.**

To see the amounts available for each diet, go to:

www.gov.ns.ca/coms/manual

Click on "Chapter 6 – Special Needs".

What do I have to do?

1. Read the list of special diets!

- *Be prepared* to inform your doctor or nutritionist of your medical conditions and dietary needs.

2. Go to a doctor or dietitian!

- *Show them the list* of special diets in this pamphlet.
- ***Get a prescription* for the special diets that you need.

3. Bring the prescription to your caseworker!

***Important: The diets prescribed must be from the special diets listed in this pamphlet.*

“Research tells us that people who live in poverty cannot afford to eat well, no matter how carefully they choose and prepare food.”

From “Healthy Eating Nova Scotia”, March 2005

For more information on the “Nutrition Project”, contact:

Dalhousie Legal Aid Service
2209 Gottingen St.,
Halifax, N.S. B3K 3B5
(902) 423-8105



Income Assistance and Nutrition: Are You Getting What You Need?

Accessing the
“Special Diet” Provision
in the Employment Support
and Income Assistance
Regulations.

What does Income Assistance cover?

In Nova Scotia, the personal allowance for an individual on Income Assistance is \$190 per month.

This money is intended to cover all non-shelter expenses such as clothing, haircuts, household products, bus tickets, emergency expenses, hygiene products, phone bills, and... FOOD.

Are Income Assistance rates sufficient to meet basic needs *plus* nutritional needs?

No!! The **Nova Scotia Nutrition Council** did a food costing study that found that income assistance recipients in Nova Scotia barely meet their basic cost of living on this amount, much less meet their nutritional needs.

The report found that these inadequate allowances are causing people to buy foods that are less nutritious but more filling in order to ward off hunger.

All Nova Scotians have a right to meet their basic food needs and to be able to eat a nutritious diet.

“Special Diets” Bring this list to your Doctor or Dietitian!!

Does this patient's health require one or more of the following diets?

- * Modified fat diet (low fat, low cholesterol, hyperlipoproteinemias)
- * High fibre or high residue diet
- * Restricted sodium diet (low salt)
- * Oral nutritional supplements (Ensure, Boost, Pediasure, etc.)
- * Polycose (calorie supplement)
- * Diet addressing a *Failure to Thrive* (individual assessment by a dietitian is recommended)

In addition, does this patient have any of the following medical conditions or dietary needs?

- * Chronic Fatigue/Fibromyalgia diet
- * Cystic Fibrosis (please specify any required supplements!!)
- * Diabetic diet (please specify the daily caloric need of the patient!!)
- * Dialysis type diet
- * Gluten free diet (Celiac disease)

- * High Calorie/High Protein diet...
 - due to a *chronic illness* (such as Cancer, Colitis, Crohn's disease, etc.)
 - due to *post-surgical weight loss*
 - due to *HIV* (please specify daily caloric need: 3000 kcal, 3250 kcal, or 3500 kcal!!)
- * Milk or wheat allergies (individual needs assessment by dietitian required)
- * Paraplegic diet

For infants – milk substitutes

- * Soy formula
- * Lactose free formula
- * Hypo-allergenic formula...
please specify the required formula
 - Pregestimil
 - Alimentum
 - Nutramigen

Maternal Nutritional Allowance **Pregnant women and women with children under age 1 are entitled to a monthly maternal allowance.**

The allowance begins on the date you inform your caseworker of your pregnancy or birth, and continues until your child reaches age 1.

**** Information for Doctors and Dietitians:**

To access the necessary diet(s), patients require a prescription stating that they have one or more of the dietary needs and/or medical conditions that appear on the list provided above.