

Policy Key: Nutrition Counseling Services

TriWest Clinical Operations – TRICARE West

SCOPE

This Policy Key outlines the criteria for coverage of clinical preventable services, nutrition counseling services, including Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) through accredited programs, disease-specific nutrition management, and Medical Nutritional Therapy (MNT) under TRICARE benefits. [1,2,3,4,5]

For Active-Duty Service Members (ADSM) and TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR) beneficiaries, reviewers must first apply guidance outlined in TRICARE Operations Manual Chapter 17, Section 3, Supplemental Health Care Program (SHCP). If a service is excluded under ADSM/TPR provisions, no further policy review is required under this or any other Policy Key. [7]

NOT COVERED

- Services provided by unlicensed or non-certified individuals. [2]
- Services not under the supervision of a physician when required [2].
- Nutritional counseling provided for general wellness purposes not linked to a covered disease or condition [1,3].
- Services for weight management programs not meeting TRICARE coverage criteria for intensive, multicomponent behavioral interventions for obesity [3].

GENERAL INFORMATION

Medical nutritional therapy must be provided by a TRICARE authorized professional provider (e.g. physician, nurse, or Registered Dietician (RD)). [2]

- Registered Dieticians (RD) may deliver Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) via an accredited DSMT program [5], support disease-specific nutrition management (e.g. Obesity) [2], and provide Medical Nutritional Therapy in the administration and maintenance of TRICARE covered medically necessary foods [4], under TRICARE coverage.
 - **RD's must:**
 - Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. college or university.
 - Be accredited by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Commission on Dietetic Registration.
 - Be licensed by the state where care is provided.
 - Under the supervision of a physician who is overseeing the episode of treatment or the covered program of services.
- TRICARE Select enrollees may receive TRICARE Prime clinical preventive services when furnished by a network provider. If a TRICARE Select enrollee uses a non-network provider, payment is made only for the clinical preventive services that are otherwise covered under the TRICARE Basic Program. [3]

COVERAGE CRITERIA

Clinical Preventative Services [6]

TRICARE Select enrollees may receive TRICARE Prime clinical preventive services when furnished by a network provider. If a TRICARE Select enrollee uses a non-network provider, payment is made only for the clinical preventive services that are otherwise covered under the TRICARE Basic Program.

Initial Level of Review may approve Nutrition Counseling for the following:

- Patient and Parent Education and Counseling regarding dietary assessment and nutrition for ages 6 years and older, in addition to obesity.

Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) [3]

DSMT are covered on an outpatient basis when the services are provided by Authorized individual professional provider who meets the quality standards established by the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education Program (NSDSMEP) recognized by the ADA or Authorized institutional TRICARE provider who is accredited by an accreditation organization approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide DSMT services.

The program includes **ALL three of the following** criteria:

- Education about self-monitoring of blood glucose, diet, and exercise; AND
- An insulin treatment plan developed specifically for the patient who is insulin-dependent, AND
- Motivates patients to use the skills for self-management.

Initial Level of Review may approve for the following services if meets the above criteria:

- **Initial Training (First Year):**
 - Prescribed or ordered by a physician for beneficiaries who have diabetes.
 - Limited to 10 hours.
 - Additional hours covered if medically necessary due to a change in medical condition, diagnosis, or treatment.
- **Follow Up Training (Subsequent Years)**
 - Beneficiaries may receive follow-up training each calendar year after the first year in which the initial training was prescribed or ordered, even when there is no documentation the initial training has been received.
 - Follow-up training includes a change in DSMT due to a change in medical condition, diagnosis, or treatment as determined by the treating physician.
 - All follow-up training is limited to two hours per year.
 - New Onset Diabetes
 - Poor glycemic control as evidenced by a glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1C) of 7.0 or more in the 90 calendar days before attending the training.
 - A change in the treatment regimen from no diabetes medications to any diabetes medication, or from oral diabetes medication to insulin.
 - High risk for complications based on poor glycemic control; documented episodes of severe hypoglycemia or acute severe hypoglycemia occurring in the past year during

which the beneficiary needed third party assistance for either emergency room visits or hospitalization.

- High risk based on at least one of the following documented complications:
 - Lack of feeling in the foot or other foot complications such as foot ulcer or amputation.
 - Pre-proliferative or proliferative retinopathy or prior laser treatment of the eye.
 - Kidney complications related to diabetes, such as macroalbuminuria or elevated creatinine.

Intensive, Multicomponent Behavioral Interventions for Obesity [3]

Initial Level of Review may approve for the following covered when rendered by a TRICARE authorized provider:

- Adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 kg/m² or higher
- Children/adolescents with a BMI value greater than the 95th percentile
- Intensive, multicomponent behavioral interventions to promote sustained weight loss (12 to 26 sessions in a year).
 - Include, but are **not** limited to behavioral management activities such as setting weight-loss goals; diet and physical activity guidance; addressing barriers to change; active self-monitoring; and strategies to maintain lifestyle changes.

Medical Nutritional Therapy (MNT)/Medical Nutritional Counseling [4]

Initial Level of Review may approve for the administration and maintenance of TRICARE covered medically necessary foods when the following is met:

- Services provided by a TRICARE authorized individual professional provider (e.g., physician, nurse, nutritionist, or Registered Dietician (RD)), **AND**
- Licensed by the state in which the care is provided, **AND**
- Must be under the supervision of a physician who is overseeing the episode of treatment or the covered program of services.

DEFINITIONS

Obesity — adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 kg/m² or higher and for children/adolescents with a BMI value greater than the 95th percentile.[4]

Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) — Outpatient service or program that is intended to educate beneficiaries in the successful self-management of diabetes. A DSMT program is accredited by the American Diabetes Association (ADA)

CODES

CPT 97802-97804

REFERENCES



- [1] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Change 28 (January 8, 2025), Chapter 1, Section 1.2, https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/c1s1_2.html
- [2] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Change 28 (January 8, 2025), Chapter 8, Section 7.1, https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/c8s7_1.html
- [3] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Chapter 11, Section 3.14, https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/c11s3_14.html
- [4] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.630-M, April 2021, Chapter 7, Section 2.2, https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/c7s2_2.html
- [5] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Chapter 11, Section 3.14 - Registered Dietitian (RD), https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/c11s3_14.html
- [6] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Chapter 7. Section 2.2 - Clinical Preventative Services – TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select. https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/C7S2_2.html
- [7] TRICARE Operations Manual (TOM) 6010.62-M, Chapter 17, Section 3 — Supplemental Health Care Program (SHCP) Contractor Responsibilities, <https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-12-19/AsOf/TOT5/C17S3.html>

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