



# Cancer Patient's Charter of Rights for Appropriate and Prompt Nutritional Support

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**The Charter aims to empower cancer patients and raise awareness to their nutritional rights while sensitising the public opinion and the European Institutions on the challenges of malnutrition in oncology.**


**Right to correct information and nutritional counseling:** every cancer patient has the right to comprehensive evidence-based clinical information on their nutritional status, possible associated consequences and available nutritional therapeutic options. People with cancer also have the right to nutritional counseling to adapt their diet to suit ensuing medical, surgical or radio-therapeutic treatment.

**Right to nutritional screening and assessment:** every cancer patient has the right to nutritional screening to reduce the risk of malnutrition, using validated tools, both at diagnosis and at regular intervals, while ensuring that the cancer type, stage and treatment are taken into account. Every cancer patient at nutritional risk has the right to prompt referral for comprehensive nutritional assessment and support from health professionals with documented skills in clinical nutrition. Nutritional assessment must be an integral part of any diagnostic-therapeutic regimes developed by oncology units.

**Right to dietary prescriptions:** every cancer patient at nutritional risk or malnutrition has the right to receive personalised dietary prescriptions by health professional with documented skills in clinical nutrition.

**Right to oral nutritional supplements:** every cancer patient at nutritional risk has the right, according to clinical conditions and specific nutrient deficiencies, to receive oral nutritional supplements, including vitamins and minerals.

**Right to appropriate and prompt artificial nutrition:** artificial nutrition is a complex therapeutic procedure that requires specific medical skills, as it may be associated with severe complications if not carried out according to evidence-based standard operating protocols. Every cancer patient at nutritional risk, who is unable maintain an adequate nutritional status



despite nutritional counseling and oral nutritional support, has the right to receive appropriate and swift artificial nutrition in every healthcare setting, as part of continuous care.

**Right to appropriate and safe home artificial nutrition:** every cancer patient, who needs to continue artificial nutrition after hospital discharge, has the right to receive appropriate and safe home artificial nutrition, prescribed by health professionals with documented skills in clinical nutrition.

**Right to nutritional support monitoring:** every cancer patient requiring nutritional support has the right to periodic reassessment of treatment adequacy and efficacy using established integrated health care regimes which ensure the collaboration of the multidisciplinary team.

**Right to treatment for overweight-related health problems during or after cancer treatment:** every cancer patient has the right to be referred to a health professional with documented skills in clinical nutrition, during or after oncologic rehabilitation programs, so that ideal body weight can be recovered or maintained, to avoid the negative impact of increased weight on prognosis and the clinical course of many cancer types.

**Right to psychological support:** malnutrition considerably affect body image and can cause social and emotional challenges. Any patient likely to experience such problems has the right to receive appropriate and swift psychological support.

**Right to be considered for participation in relevant clinical nutrition trials:** every cancer patient has the right to be considered for enrollment in relevant clinical studies on nutritional support.

