

GUIDELINES FOR ESTIMATING FOOD AND FLUID CONSUMPTION

To avoid errors and ensure the highest agreement between staff members, we recommend the following guidelines for calculating an estimate of total percentage consumed. Consider presenting these guidelines during in-service trainings on feeding assistance.

1. List each food and fluid item on the tray at the point of meal tray delivery and record resident consumption of each item at the point of meal tray pick-up using the bottom portion of the Mealtime Observational Protocol.
2. Use a continuous percentage scale, from 0% to 100%, for estimation instead of percentage categories, such as 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%, which usually result in overestimates of intake.
3. Each food and fluid item on the meal tray is counted equally as opposed to assigning differential values to different items (e.g., meat = 40%, salad = 20%), which results in error due to the complexity of the calculations.
4. Ideally, consumption of fluids should be recorded in ounces, in addition to percent consumed, to allow for an accurate measure of hydration status.
5. Oral nutritional supplements consumed during the meal should not count in the total percent consumed estimation, though the amount consumed (in ounces) of the supplement should be recorded separately to allow an estimate of total calories during meals by the licensed nurses and/or dietitian staff. Supplements are intended to be given between meals. However, we recognize that some residents prefer supplements to the served meal. Staff should ensure that meal substitutions are also offered as an alternative to the served meal.