

Specialised forms of food for adult patients will gradually become state-funded

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Today, on 14 July, at the sitting of the Cabinet of Ministers, amendments to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers were approved, determining procedures for the organisation and payment of health care services* and stipulating the gradual start of financing enteral** and parenteral*** feeding mixtures for adult patients from the state budget.

As previously reported, the state currently funds both enteral and parenteral nutrition for hospitalised patients and for children under the age of 18 provided that they are registered with the Palliative Care Cabinet of the Children's Clinical University Hospital (BKUS). In cooperation with specialists in the field, indications have been developed in which case parenteral and enteral feeding mixtures should be provided to the patient so that the principles are equal throughout the country. It should be noted that the draft regulation only provides for the supply of such mixtures that can be administered parenterally by bypassing the intestinal tract or enterally through a probe or an artificial opening.

The procedure envisages that the Riga East Clinical University Hospital, which employs a team of enteral and parenteral nutrition specialists, will be the coordinating medical institution, which will assess the compliance of adult patients with the indications for receiving state-funded nutritional mixtures. If necessary, the state will also fund enteral and parenteral nutrition in home care. This means that the doctor's assistant or nurse will go to the patient's home to help with the feeding process.

The provision of specialised food is also continued for persons who have reached the age of 18 and are registered with the BKUS Palliative Care Cabinet, as well as for patients with cystic fibrosis and children in cases of severe protein intolerance or severe malabsorption syndromes.

* Amendments to Cabinet Regulation No. 555 of 28 August 2018, "Procedures for the Organisation and Payment of Health Care Services"

** Enteral feeding is the administration of nutrients directly into the stomach or intestinal tract using a probe that is inserted there. This type of feeding is used when the patient is unable to eat food by mouth.

*** Parenteral nutrition is the artificial feeding of a person by bypassing the digestive tract and injecting nutrients into their vein.

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