

Principles of Effective Charting



Timely

It is important to chart as soon as possible after an interaction with a patient

Accurate

Because charts are legal documents the utmost accuracy could make all the difference in a lawsuit or investigation. Make sure to be very precise in your charting.



Concise

You, like all other health professionals, will be very busy and need to review charts quickly. For this reason, keep chart notes concise while including enough information

Relevant

Along with being concise, be sure to include all the most relevant information. A good rule of thumb is that anything related directly to the nutrition diagnosis should be included.



Neutral

Steer away from emotional language or personal bias statements in your chart notes. Do not make any assumptions about the patient, keep assessments to direct observations.

Naming Patient

Always refer to the patient as 'Patient' instead of using their name.

HELLO

MY NAME IS

Patient



Dated & Signed

Be sure to date your chart note for the date when you saw the patient.
If it is not possible to write your chart note on the day you saw the patient, you may date the chart note on the day you wrote it, state that it is a late note, and write the reason.
Health authorities may have differing policies surrounding this issue.
Sign the bottom of the chart to authenticate it.



Using the Nutrition Care Process

The Nutrition Care Process should be reflected in everything Dietitians do to ensure good practice and thoroughness.

See how a chart should reflect the Nutrition Care Process in this chart audit

Principles of Effective Formatting



Legible

Write clearly so your notes can be easily read and photocopied if needed



Avoid Abbreviations

Abbreviations can be very easily misunderstood and lead to dangerous mistakes



Don't Leave Any White Space

Begin your notes directly following the last note written

HINT



If You Make a Mistake

Simply cross out the note with a single line, write 'error', and initial it.
Do not scribble out a note so it is unreadable.
Never rip a page out of a chart.