Medicare Food Card Update: Important Changes for Members With Chronic Conditions

Medicare has recently updated the rules for who can qualify for a **Healthy Food Card** under certain Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. These changes mainly affect members who have **chronic health conditions**, and it's important to understand what's new so you know whether you still qualify—or what steps you may need to take next.

Medicare now requires **additional criteria** for members with chronic conditions to qualify for a food card. Not everyone with a chronic condition will automatically qualify anymore. Plans must verify specific health needs, risk levels, and care requirements before approving the benefit.

📌 What's Changing

- **Chronic condition alone** is no longer enough to qualify.
- Members must meet **extra clinical criteria** set by Medicare and the insurance plan.
- Plans may require documentation showing the condition affects **daily living, nutrition needs**, or **disease management**.
- Some plans may limit food cards to members who are considered **high-risk** or who are enrolled in certain **care management programs**.
- Food card amounts may vary based on the level of need and the plan's updated guidelines.

You may now need to meet one or more of the following:

- **Specific diagnosis requirements** (such as diabetes, CHF, COPD, ESRD, etc.)
- Evidence that your condition impacts your **ability to maintain proper nutrition**
- Participation in a **care coordination or disease management program**
- Recent **hospitalizations or ER visits** related to your chronic condition
- A doctor's note confirming **nutritional risk** or **dietary limitations**

Not all plans will use the same criteria, so it's important to check your specific plan's rules.

Medicare is tightening guidelines to ensure food cards are used for members who have:

- **Documented nutritional needs**
- **Higher health risks**
- **Chronic conditions that directly benefit from dietary support**

If you currently receive a food card—or think you may qualify—here are the next steps:

- **Check your plan's updated rules** for 2027
- **Review your chronic condition documentation**
- **Ask whether you meet the new criteria**
- **Confirm if your food card amount is changing**
- **Schedule a benefits review** if you're unsure

Staying Clean Helps You Stay Healthy

As we get older, good hygiene becomes even more important for staying healthy and feeling your best. Bathing regularly, washing your hands, brushing your teeth, and wearing clean clothes help prevent infections, reduce body odor, and support overall wellness. Clean skin also lowers the risk of rashes, sores, and irritation—especially for anyone who spends long periods sitting or lying down.

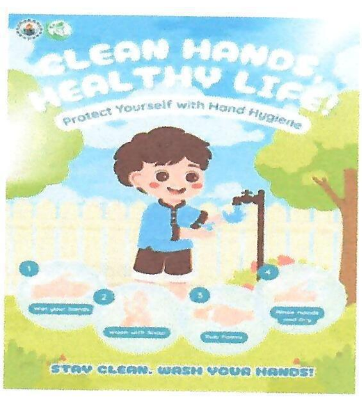
Oral hygiene matters too. Brushing and flossing daily can reduce gum disease, protect your teeth, and may even support heart health. Keeping your mouth clean also makes eating more comfortable and helps you enjoy your meals.

Hygiene goes beyond personal care. Washing your bedding and towels regularly, keeping your living space tidy, and trimming your nails all help reduce germs and improve comfort. These small habits make a big difference in how you feel each day and can help prevent avoidable health issues.

Good hygiene doesn't just help you feel better—it can actually help you **live longer**. Preventing infections, protecting your skin, and maintaining oral health all reduce the risk of serious complications that can lead to hospital stays.

Cleanliness supports stronger immunity, lowers inflammation, and helps your body stay resilient as you age. When you avoid infections and keep your body functioning well, you protect your long-term health and reduce risks that can shorten life expectancy.

Taking care of yourself isn't just about looking good—it's about protecting your health, maintaining independence, and feeling confident in your daily life. A little extra attention to personal hygiene today can support a healthier, safer, and longer tomorrow.



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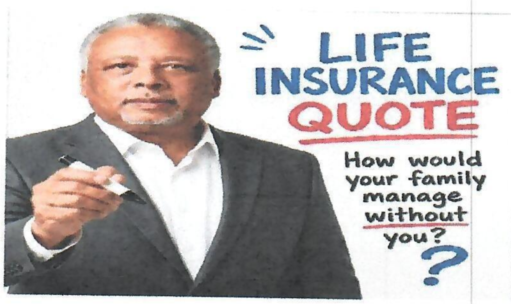

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