



McCallum Place
Eating Disorder Centers

Nutrition Overview

(800) 828-8158 | www.mccallumplace.com

Our Nutrition Philosophy

McCallum Place helps patients restore a healthy relationship with food through a nondiet approach. The cornerstones of our nutrition approach are balance, flexibility, and trust. We believe that weight management is achieved by eating a balanced diet in which all foods are considered neutral, and we avoid labeling foods as “good” or “bad” but instead focus on taste. Our staff helps patients practice flexibility around food because we believe that this is an essential component of recovery from an eating disorder. Trust is built through patients’ individual sessions with their dietitian, consistent meals and snacks, and feedback regarding changes in weight and lab values. Over time, patients will move away from reliance and control and toward empowerment and trust with food and their bodies.





Therapeutic Meals & Snacks



Each time a patient at McCallum Place eats, they do so in a structured, supportive, and therapeutic environment. Patients complete every meal and snack at a peer support table accompanied by a trained meal therapist to ensure and protect a supportive eating environment. We believe that therapeutic meals and snacks promote self-acceptance in eating, the ability to enjoy a greater variety of foods, increased capability to practice mindful eating, and self-awareness of internal capacities with eating. Throughout this process, patients are able to build more self-confidence in their ability to nourish their bodies. At McCallum Place, we recognize that eating without engaging in disordered behaviors is an enormous challenge for the majority of our patients. Because of this, our meal therapists and cooks cultivate a therapeutic eating experience.

What We Provide

In order to assist patients in their recovery, McCallum Place provides the following:

- **Structured meals and snacks:** Meals and snacks are scheduled at the same time each day, providing consistency.
- **Adequate energy:** Each patient's individualized meal plan meets their unique energy needs.
- **Balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fat:** Meals and snacks provide a balance of all macronutrients.
- **Choice and variety:** Each patient has a choice between appetizer, entrée, and dessert for each meal and several different snack options that change daily. We update the menu on a three-week cycle, offering an array of options to ensure that patients have a variety of foods available.
- **Vegetarian and nonvegetarian options:** McCallum Place accommodates a vegetarian diet as long as it is not an eating disorder behavior. Vegan diets are not accommodated.
- **Moderation:** Patients are offered caffeine, sweeteners, and condiments in moderation.
- **Exposure:** Patients have the opportunity to participate in restaurant outings, cooking class, grocery store exposure and coaching, and meal and snack passes. Dietitians also support patients through "fear food challenges" to overcome eating disorder-imposed food rules and provide an opportunity to practice and prepare for real-life scenarios.
- **Reflection:** Therapeutic postmeal groups make space for patients to reflect on mealtime thoughts, feelings, and experiences immediately following each meal and snack. Nutrition counseling with a dietitian provides the opportunity to discuss and problem-solve difficulties within the nutrition restoration process.
- **Redirection and support around food rituals:** Meal therapists assist patients in refraining from engaging in eating disorder behaviors.
- **Ability to practice and build trust in internal cues:** Patients can refamiliarize themselves with their bodily sensations and begin to attempt to reconnect with hunger and fullness cues.

How We Implement Our Nutrition Philosophy

- **Assessment with a registered dietitian:** On admission day, each patient meets with their dietitian for a complete nutritional assessment. During this time, the dietitian determines an appropriate target body weight range and initial meal plan.
- **Follow-up with a registered dietitian:** Patients typically meet individually with their dietitian biweekly. At each of these sessions, the dietitian evaluates progress with weight restoration or stabilization and adjusts the meal plan accordingly. While the dietitian dictates when a meal plan needs to be adjusted, the patient often has an opportunity to voice preferences. For example, if a patient is not meeting weekly weight restoration goals, the dietitian will suggest a meal plan increase, but the patient can dictate what meal or snack is adjusted within reason. Notably, meal plan adjustments are not the only thing happening in these sessions; complete nutritional counseling occurs as well.





Common Topics of Discussion in Nutrition Sessions



As pointed out above, meal plan adjustments are not the only thing happening in nutrition sessions. Below are just a few of the topics that may be discussed during nutrition counseling.

- **Education:** Nutrition education is key to a successful recovery. Registered dietitians are experts in how nutrition impacts the human body, thus they are uniquely qualified to provide thorough and science-based education. Dietitians discuss the components of food that are vital to life and how different macronutrients and micronutrients affect the body. Additionally, discussions around how disordered eating behaviors impact the body can better inform the patient of the consequences of eating disorders both in the short and long term.
- **Setting realistic expectations:** Each dietitian is acutely aware that eating is often extremely difficult for their patients. This will be discussed openly and honestly. If there is a specific struggle reported by a patient or meal therapist, the dietitian will discuss it with the patient and may even set up a protocol or extra support to better ensure that the patient is getting the support needed at the table.

- **Current struggles:** If there is a concern about eating disorder behaviors or thoughts, especially at mealtime, this will be discussed in session. Even if a patient is not currently engaging in disordered behavior, eating disorder urges (restricting, purging, bingeing, exercising, etc.) are discussed.
- **Body image:** Body image is another common discussion topic in nutrition counseling, as weight changes can have a drastic impact on body image that is often already distorted. Body image may be processed in conjunction with other members of the treatment team as well.
- **Fear foods:** Evaluation of what specific foods incite anxiety is important in moving beyond the fear. Dietitians work with their patients to identify a hierarchy of fear foods and schedule exposures to these foods, often to be completed together in session.

Other Nutrition-Related Considerations



“Food first” is our motto at McCallum Place, but it is important to recognize that some patients are either physically or emotionally unable to meet their nutritional needs through solid food intake alone. Supplement drinks are provided for portions of a meal or a full snack that cannot be completed, ensuring that patients are still meeting their nutritional needs while attempting to mitigate some physical discomfort and/or emotional distress. Occasionally, if supplement use becomes too frequent, parameters around its usage are discussed to ensure that the supplement is not being used to avoid fear foods.

If a patient becomes unable to complete meals or supplements orally, the treatment team will discuss if it is appropriate to place a feeding tube (typically nasogastric). Tube feedings can be used either to “push” supplements that cannot be completed orally directly following a meal or snack or to run a continuous feed using a pump. The registered dietitian calculates a patient’s individualized nutritional needs and often uses continuous pumped feeds in conjunction with an oral meal plan. This approach is helpful when meal plans are large in volume or a patient’s physical discomfort prevents completion of the full meal plan. Feeding tube placement is never used as a punishment; rather, it is meant to be a helpful tool as patients work toward recovery from eating disorders. Tube usage is not considered lightly and is only used if all other strategies are not working.



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