

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BRITISH SPECIALIST NUTRITION ASSOCIATION (BSNA)



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Catherine has worked for BSNA for five years and has over 20 years in policy development, communications and public affairs, including in Parliament, at a health charity and within local government.

BSNA is the leading voice for specialist nutrition in the UK. Here, we highlight BSNA's role in representing and communicating the value of its members' specialist products, which are aimed at supporting individuals during their most vulnerable times.

BSNA is the trade association representing high-quality specialist nutritional and aseptically compounded products in the UK. Its members produce infant formula, follow-on formula, young child formula, complementary weaning foods (baby foods), medical foods for diagnosed disorders and medical conditions and parenteral nutrition. They also provide aseptic compounding services for chemotherapy, antibiotics and Central Intravenous Additive Services (CIVAS).

BSNA is a member organisation and works to communicate this value in terms of improved health, ensuring patients and consumers have suitable access to products, which follow strict regulations and safety requirements. Its members' products play an invaluable role in supporting people during the most vulnerable times in their lives, whether it be early life, during illness or at the end of life.



Breastfeeding is best for babies as it contains the right balance of nutrients for infants and provides other benefits to both baby and mother. However, for those who cannot, or choose not to, breastfeed, a scientifically developed infant formula milk is the only suitable alternative.

The composition, food safety and communication of formula for infants are strictly and specifically regulated. Additional restrictions beyond general food law apply, such as for contaminant levels, microbiological standards and compositional criteria. All formulas for infants are manufactured in accordance with the highest safety and quality standards.

In addition to standard first infant formula (0-6 months), follow-on formula (6-12 months) and young child formula (1-3 years), BSNA members also produce a range of specialist formula milks, made specifically for infants who have special dietary requirements associated with a disease, disorder or medical condition that may be difficult or impossible to manage through breast milk or the use of standard infant formula alone. This could include conditions such as allergies, digestive disorders, disturbances in amino acid or fatty acid metabolism, or cystic fibrosis.

The right nutrition plays an essential role in growth, health and development. When not supported adequately, an underlying illness or condition can lead to nutritional deficiencies with malnutrition, stunting and/or wasting. This can lead to long-lasting health implications. All specialist formula milks available on prescription go through a strict application process, which the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) – the committee responsible for advising the prescribing of foodstuffs – assesses and approves. The ACBS takes into consideration the formulation, efficacy

REFERENCES

Please visit:
www.NHDMag.co.uk/article-references.html

and cost of all these specialist formula milks for the dietary management of clinical conditions.

COMPLEMENTARY WEANING (BABY) FOODS

BSNA also represents manufacturers of complementary foods, specifically designed for the nutritional requirements of infants and young children up to three years of age.

Commercial complementary foods are specifically regulated under UK law, which lays down composition and safety criteria. This legislation incorporates the specific nutritional needs of infants and young children, whilst also taking into account the strict food safety requirements necessary to protect this vulnerable population group. These foods provide a variety of different tastes and textures suitable for specific developmental stages to help support a family's feeding journey and all:

- comply with strict compositional criteria;
- meet high standards of quality and safety;
- comply with very strict pesticide controls;
- contain no artificial colours or sweeteners and have controlled salt levels;
- provide appropriate amounts of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins and minerals;
- provide appropriate textures to help the transition to family foods.

BSNA represents manufacturers of medical foods, or FSMPs (foods for special medical



purposes). These are designed to help meet the nutritional needs of patients who are affected by or at risk of malnutrition due to a disease, disorder or medical condition that makes it difficult for their nutritional needs to be satisfied through the consumption of other foods alone.

More than three million people in the UK are estimated to be malnourished or at risk of malnutrition and the health and social expenditure of disease-related malnutrition is estimated at £19.6 billion per year in England.¹ Appropriate medical nutrition support has the potential to significantly reduce the prevalence of

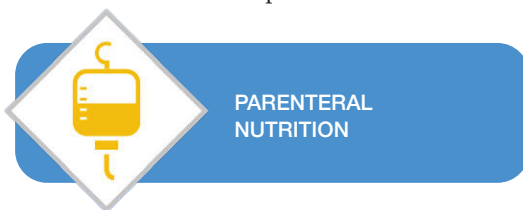
malnutrition, consequently saving the UK's health service hundreds of millions of pounds per year.

Medical foods are regulated under law, which sets out detailed labelling and compositional rules. Healthcare professionals are responsible for the clinically appropriate prescribing of medical foods, including oral nutritional supplements (ONS), enteral tube feeds and metabolic products in the form of food, drinks, ONS and tube feeds designed specifically for use by patients with inherited metabolic disorders including phenylketonuria (PKU) and maple syrup urine disease (MSUD). FSMPs also include specialist infant milks, otherwise known as FSMPs intended for infants. Products also include specialist infant milks and protein substitutes for older children and adults.

ONS are a cost-effective way to manage malnutrition across a wide range of settings such as hospitals, care homes, clinics and in the community. ONS can help to reduce clinical complications and support fewer hospital admissions and readmissions, shorter length of stay in hospital and fewer healthcare needs in the community such as GP visits and care at home.^{1,2}

In addition to enteral feeds, some BSNA members provide a range of complementary services to support patients receiving enteral tube feeding at home. These include the supply of pumps, ancillaries and nursing support.

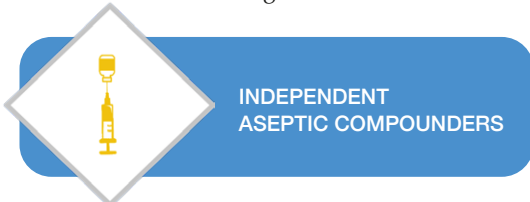
BSNA members work with healthcare providers, regulators and government agencies to ensure that medical foods are accessible to all patients who require them, to protect the health and well-being of the patient and to save valuable NHS money. It is also important that healthcare professionals have access to a range of medical foods to ensure that the individual needs of their patients can be met.



Parenteral nutrition (PN) is the provision of nutrition directly into the bloodstream, providing a lifeline for those who are unable to achieve adequate oral or enteral nutritional intake. PN is typically considered for patients who are malnourished and have an inadequate

or unsafe oral intake, or a non-functional, inaccessible or perforated gastrointestinal tract. It can be provided to a full range of patients, from neonates and children, to adults and those with both short- and long-term conditions. Annually, in the UK, 2600 patients receive PN on an ongoing basis and 2500 receive PN on a short-term basis, such as following surgery.³

Our members take great care in ensuring that a high-quality product is maintained throughout preparation, supply, delivery and administration to patients. PN is provided to patients on prescription and is governed by pharmaceutical law. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) is the UK body responsible for the authorisation and regulation of PN.



BSNA also represents companies in the ‘independent aseptic compounding’ sector, who manufacture aseptically prepared intravenous medicines used to treat and/or manage a range of diseases, disorders and medical conditions.

BSNA members produce four main types of IV solutions:

- Chemotherapy
- Parenteral nutrition
- Intravenous antibiotics
- Central Intravenous Additive Service (CIVAS): this can include any preparation of a medicine that needs to be manipulated aseptically (eg, reconstituted, diluted or added to an infusion) to create a ready-to-use injectable medicine

Aseptic production involves the manipulation of sterile starting materials and components in such a way that they remain sterile and uncontaminated whilst being prepared for presentation in a form suitable for administration to patients. The techniques used include the use of sterile production facilities, sterile clothing, non-touch techniques and environmental air filtration.

All independent aseptic compounders hold a manufacturing special licence issued by the MHRA. This licence permits the compounding of medicines that are referred to as ‘specials’. Specials are manufactured specifically at the request of a prescriber when there are no suitably licenced medicines available to meet a specific patient’s needs.

REPRESENTING THE SECTORS

BSNA’s purpose is to act as the representative body of credible and responsible specialist nutrition and medicine companies that abide by strict legislation. BSNA liaises with government agencies and regulators, European and global colleagues, health organisations and policymakers. This is to ensure that patients and consumers have suitable access to products and that products continue to follow strict regulations and safety requirements.

BSNA members carry out extensive research to ensure that products are safer and more advanced than ever before and the products members manufacture play a key role in supporting people during the most vulnerable times in their lives. It is a responsibility that BSNA members take very seriously.

For more information about the sectors that BSNA represents, please visit: www.bsna.co.uk.



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