

Special Diet Allowance Changes starting in April 2011

(revised: March 2, 2011)



This Information Sheet is for people living with HIV (“PHAs”) who are receiving the Ontario Disability Support Program “ODSP” Special Diet Allowance.

The Special Diet Allowance “SDA” is changing. The **existing “old” SDA** program is being replaced with a **new SDA** with new rules. This Information Sheet may help you and your health professional to understand how the changes will affect you, what your options are, and when you send in your **new SDA** application. **If you are receiving an SDA now, you have to send in a new SDA application. ODSP must receive your new SDA application by July 31, 2011, because the old SDA ends July 31, 2011.**

What are the main changes to the SDA?

- The **new SDA** amounts begin April 1, 2011, but your **old SDA** will continue until July 31, 2011, or the month after you send in your **new SDA** application, whichever happens first.
- There are 29 medical conditions on the **new SDA** list. There were 43 medical conditions on the existing **old SDA** list. So some medical conditions are not on the new SDA list.
- The amounts for some medical conditions are increasing and the amounts for some other medical conditions are decreasing.
- Some medical conditions that require similar diets are grouped together on the new SDA schedule. This limits the amount of money that you can get if you have more than one of the grouped conditions.
- When you sign the **new SDA** application form, you are giving permission for SDA program officials to get extra information about your medical condition from the health professional who completed your new SDA form. We have been told that ODSP medical advisors will get the information, not your local ODSP worker, and, that it will only be information about your SDA medical conditions: for example, if you get Special Diet Allowance for diabetes but you also have depression, ODSP should only get medical information about your diabetes, not your depression.

The maximum SDA is still \$250.00. There is a chart of all of the new Special Diet Allowance medical conditions and amounts on page 4 of this Information Sheet.

How will the changes affect people living with HIV?

Under the existing **old SDA**, anyone living with HIV is entitled to \$75, \$150, \$180 or \$240, depending on the amount of weight loss/body wasting from 0% to more than 10%.

The new SDA has only two weight loss categories:

- **weight loss of more than 5% but less than 10% of usual body weight - \$191**
- **weight loss of more than 10% of usual body weight - \$242**

So, you will only receive a new SDA for your HIV if your health professional indicates that you have lost more than 5% of your usual body weight.

Who completes my new SDA application?

Your health professional has to complete your new SDA application. HALCO has prepared the attached letter about HIV and the Special Diet Allowance which you can give to your health professional with your new SDA application. You also have to sign your application.

When should I send in my new SDA application?

You do *not* have to send in your new SDA application right away. The deadline for ODSP to receive your new SDA is July 31, 2011. Some people will be better off waiting until closer to the July 31, 2011, deadline, because:

- **Your old SDA will continue** at the same amount until either the month after ODSP receives your new SDA application, or July 31 2011, whichever happens *first*.
- **If your SDA will decrease or end**, the change will start the month after ODSP receives your new SDA form. So the earlier you send in your new SDA application, the earlier your SDA will decrease or end. For example, if you send your new SDA application to ODSP in March, your old SDA will decrease or end in April, but if you submit your new SDA application in July, your old SDA will decrease or end in August. **If your SDA decreases or ends, call HALCO right away** (see HALCO contact information on page 3).
- **If your SDA will increase** under the new SDA, you will get the increase as of April 1, 2011, as long as ODSP receives your new SDA application form by July 31, 2011. You will receive any SDA increase retroactively back to April 1, 2011.

The chart of all of the new Special Diet Allowance medical conditions and amounts can help you to figure out how much your new SDA will be (see page 4 of this Information Sheet).

-Unless you are sure that your SDA amount will stay the same or increase, we recommend that you wait until July 2011 to send in your new SDA application.

-Remember: if ODSP does not receive your new SDA application by July 31, 2011, your old SDA will end on July 31, 2011.

What do I do with my completed SDA application?

If you are receiving an SDA now, you should have received a stamped addressed envelope to send your new SDA application to the central ODSP SDA unit. If you want to know when your new SDA application arrives at the central ODSP SDA unit, you can send your new SDA application by Registered mail. ****Remember to keep a copy of your completed SDA application for your records.***

If you are not receiving an SDA now, you return your completed SDA application to your local ODSP office and ask the ODSP office for a copy for your records date-stamped as received.

What if I already sent in my new SDA application?

If you have already sent in your new SDA application, you will get a letter from ODSP to tell you how much (if any) your new SDA will be. If your new SDA is less than your old SDA or you are not eligible for a new SDA, call HALCO right away for advice (see HALCO contact information on page 3).

What if the SDA decrease affects my eligibility for ODSP?

For a small number of people, a decrease in SDA may affect their ongoing eligibility for ODSP. If you are not receiving much money from ODSP because you have other income (for example: Canada Pension Plan benefits “CPP”), you should call HALCO for advice about how the changes will affect your ODSP benefits *before* you send in your new SDA application (see HALCO contact information below). If your medications are costly you will probably be eligible for ODSP Extended Health Benefits, including a drug card, even if you do not receive any money from ODSP.

I am not getting an SDA, can I apply now?

If you are not receiving an SDA now, you can apply for the old SDA up until March 31, 2011. You can call your ODSP worker to ask for both an existing/old SDA application and a new SDA application. After April 1, 2011, you can only apply for a new SDA. You can take your completed SDA applications to your local ODSP office and ask the ODSP office to make copies for you and to date-stamp your copies. ****Remember to keep a copy of your completed SDA applications for your records.***

Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance and Infant Special Diet Allowance

The Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance “PBNFA” is in addition to any other SDA and now there is a new separate PBNFA application form. The PBNFA amounts are still \$40 lactose tolerant and \$50 lactose intolerant. The SDA application includes a diet for pregnant women who have gestational diabetes. The “Insufficient Lactation to Sustain Breast-feeding or Breast-feeding is Contraindicated” Special Diet Allowance is for infants whose mothers cannot or should not breast-feed. This infant SDA is for the first twelve months of the infant’s life and is part of the SDA application. The new SDA increases the infant diet amounts: \$145 for infant who is lactose tolerant \$145 or \$162 if infant is lactose intolerant. If you think you are eligible for the PBNFA, the gestational diabetes diet, or the infant SDA, you should apply as soon as possible.

What if my SDA is cut or denied?

- If your SDA is cut or denied, or if you disagree with any ODSP decision, you can request an Internal Review within 30 days.**
- If you are living with HIV, call HALCO right away for advice (see below).**

What if I have questions?

If you are living with HIV in Ontario and have any questions about how the ODSP Special Diet Allowance might affect you, please call HALCO:

HALCO – HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario)
65 Wellesley Street East, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Telephone: 416-340-7790 or toll-free 1-888-705-8889
www.halco.org

- HALCO provides free legal services for people living with HIV in Ontario. -

Check the HALCO *What’s New* website page for updates: www.halco.org/new.html

New Special Diet Allowance Medical Conditions (start April 1, 2011)

(Maximum \$250.00 per recipient per month)

Medical Condition	Amount	Medical Condition	Amount
-Unintended weight loss due to one of more of these medical conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) • Anorexia Nervosa • Cirrhosis (stage 3 and 4) • Congestive Heart Failure • Crohn's Disease • Cystic Fibrosis • HIV / AIDS • Lupus • Malignancy • Multiple Sclerosis (MS) • Ostomies • Pancreatic Insufficiency • Short Bowel Syndrome • Ulcerative Colitis 		-Food Allergy – Milk / Dairy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-8 years of age \$32 • 9-18 years of age \$63 • 19-50 years of age \$32 • Over 50 years of age \$47 	
		-Lactose Intolerance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-8 years of age \$30 • 9-18 years of age \$59 • 19-50 years of age \$30 • Over 50 years of age \$45 	
		Note: If a person has both of these conditions, they will get the amount for Food Allergy – Milk / Dairy	
		-Dysphagia requiring thickening fluids	\$125
-Lost between 5% and 10% of usual body weight	\$191	-Osteoporosis	\$38
-Lost more than 10% of usual body weight	\$242		
-Chronic Wounds and Burns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 & 2 • Stage 3 & 4 	\$88	-Renal Failure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-dialysis \$52 • Peritoneal / Hemodialysis \$88 	
			\$191
-Diabetes -Gestational Diabetes -Extreme Obesity -Hypertension -Hyperlipidemia or Hypercholesterolemia	\$81	-Food Allergy – Wheat -Celiac Disease	\$97
	\$102		
		\$51	Note: If a person has both of these conditions, they will get one allowance of \$97
Note: If a person has 2 or more of these conditions, they will get one allowance – whichever amount is the highest for the conditions they have	\$86	-Insufficient lactation to sustain breast-feeding or breast-feeding contraindicated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant is Lactose Tolerant • Infant is Lactose Intolerant 	\$145
	\$51		
		(ends after infant's first birthday)	