

Status: Guideline: offers direction and guidance on good practice, need not necessarily be strictly adhered to.	Policy No: ADLG 09 Version No: 0 Date Approved: 01/03/11 Review Date: 01/03/13
Title: Guidelines for assisting a User of a Cheshire Service with Eating and Drinking	
Written by: Clinical Practice Project Group	
Approved by: National Risk Management Committee	
Cross Reference: ADLG 05, ICG 01, ICG 02, BPH 02	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure appropriate assistance is offered to Cheshire service users with eating and drinking and to ensure the dignity of the person is respected when staff are providing assistance.

2.0 Scope

These guidelines refer to all Cheshire Services where staff assist service users with eating and drinking. All the activities of daily living are generic, however in line with the Best Possible Health plan, staff will assist people to discuss their own personal care needs and put actions in place where needed. This will be recorded in the service user's Best Possible Health Personal plan and will be kept in a secure place of the service user's choosing. It will be adapted and updated as the needs of the service user's change.

3.0 Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of all staff involved in assisting service users with eating and drinking to be familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.
- It is the responsibility of all service managers to ensure staff are familiar with the guidelines and to monitor compliance.

4.0 Definitions

Dysphagia; is a medical term for swallowing problems. It happens when the muscles of chewing and swallowing (lips ,jaw, tongue, palate, throat muscles) become weakened .Weakness of the mouth and throat muscles can result in food or drink “going down the wrong way” .This means that the food or drink will go into the lungs instead of the stomach. This can cause chest infections and

pneumonia. It can happen in a number of conditions ;MS, Cerebral Palsy, Head injury, Parkinson's, Motor Neurone Disease. This condition is managed by a Speech and Language Therapist and Dietician , G.P.,PHN, Cheshire nurse

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Only in exceptional circumstances, should the guidelines not be adhered to, for example if a staff member was of the opinion that by following the guidelines that a service user would be harmed. In these circumstances, the staff member should consult immediately with the service user and his/her doctor and follow any advice given.

5.0 Guidelines

Equipment / Environment

- Remove any inappropriate items from the service user's table/eating area e.g. sputum pot, urinals, etc. and clean area with disinfectant if required.
- Clear a space for the service user's food plate, cutlery, cup.

Guidelines

- All service users will be supported to manage their own eating and drinking. However, in circumstances where this is not possible or the service user chooses not to, Cheshire Ireland will provide support in line with a person centred approach as per the Best Possible Health plan.
- In relation to eating and drinking, staff will respect the rights of service users to be treated with sensitivity and respect as individuals, and to have wishes and opinions considered fairly (Cheshire Ireland National Consumer Committee, 2004).
- Ascertain what the service user would like to eat and drink and whether there are any dietary restrictions. Please ensure dietary preferences are communicated to the appropriate kitchen staff/care staff.
- Engage with the service user to explain the process, to gain co-operation and consent and to ascertain usual habits.
- Clean mouth and if applicable, clean dentures (Ref: ADLG 05).
- Ask/assist the service user to sit upright.
- Please ensure if service user is dysphasic (has difficulty swallowing) that specific, current Speech and Language guidelines are followed, as per the Best Possible Health Eating and Drinking plan, to prevent choking and aspiration into the lungs.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly (Ref: Guidelines for Hand Hygiene, ICG 02).
- Aim to make the mealtime a pleasant experience for the service user.
- Obtain the correct food and drink, cutlery and napkin.

- Set the meal out in a pleasing manner for the service user and within easy reach of the service user.
- If the service user is unable to see the food, describe the meal to them.
- Cut up the food if necessary.
- Protect the service user's clothing with a napkin or paper towel.
- Sit down with the person so that a more relaxed approach is conveyed.
- If the service user is only able to use one hand, a plate guard and non-slip mat may help. If they are unable to grip ordinary cutlery, large handled cutlery can be ordered.
- Tailor the speed and manner in which food/drink is offered to the service user's needs/wishes. Eating should be slow and deliberate. Allow the service user time to chew and swallow the food before presenting the next mouthful.
- Adjust the size of the mouthful to suit the service user. Choose food of appropriate texture and temperature. (Avoid tough, chewy foods, avoid solids in a liquid base, avoid foods that form a solid mass and avoid fizzy drinks.
- Respect the service user's dignity and use the napkin to remove dribbles of food or drink that may run down the chin.
- When giving a drink, tip the cup/glass very gently so that the flow is controlled. Care should be taken with hot drinks, particularly if using a polystyrene cup, as it is difficult to judge the temperature of the liquid inside.
- Make sure the service user takes small bites and sips.
- Alternate solids and liquids.
- Encourage the service user to eat and drink if necessary, but do not press the service user once they have indicated that they have had a sufficient amount.
- Following the meal assist the service user to meet hygiene needs (mouth, teeth and hands) as necessary.
- Have the service user sit up **for at least a half hour after eating and advise not to lie down.**
- Assist the service user to return to bed or chair as per personal preference. Ensure the service user is comfortable.
- Report any coughing or choking incident to your line manager.
- Remove unwanted food, crockery and cutlery.
- Wipe up any spillages on the table, tray or locker.
- Restore the service user's environment, i.e. put the service user's belongings back within easy reach.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly (ICG 01, ICG 02).
- If any problems which are not being treated are highlighted, please identify

in Best Possible Health Priority Areas for Action for Diet and Nutrition. This may require appointments with G.P. or other clinical referral (Speech and Language therapist or Dietician).

Trouble Shooting

Some Warning Signs of Swallowing Problems

Any one of these signs could indicate a serious problem with swallowing. Consult the G.P., Line Manager or Speech and Language Therapist immediately.

- Clearing the throat frequently.
- A voice that sounds wet or "gurgly".
- Spoken or non verbal expressions about fear of eating, swallowing, or choking.
- A delay in swallowing after food has been chewed.
- Holding food or liquid in the mouth without swallowing it.
- Exaggerated movements of the jaw, lips, or tongue.
- Tilting the head back to eat or drink.
- Swallowing several times on one bite.
- Food or liquid falling out of the mouth.
- Food left in the mouth after swallowing it or finishing a meal.
- Coughing during or after the meal.
- Fatigue or exhaustion after or during the meal.
- Significant weight loss over time.
- Frequent chest infections.

6.0 References

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Preventing Swallowing Problems - Advanced Stages of Huntington's Disease, Caregivers Handbook.

Policy on the Management of Dysphagia

Liverpool PCT and the Royal Liverpool & Broadgreen University Hospital Trust.

Safe Swallow ,Easy Eating (2010) Dept of Nutrition and Dietetics ,Speech and Language Dept St Vincent's Hospital Dublin