

# Swallowing Advice

## Before Eating and Drinking

- Sit as upright as possible, preferably in a chair and at a table.
- Reduce any distractions such as radio or television.

## During Eating and Drinking

- Eat and drink slowly. Do not rush.
- Take one mouthful at a time. Sometimes two or more swallows may be needed to help clear the food or drink from your throat or mouth.
- Avoid more difficult foods/drinks when you are tired e.g. late in the day.
- Ensure your mouth is clear before taking another mouthful.
- Alternating sips of drink and mouthfuls of food may be helpful.
- Drinks should be taken from an ordinary cup or glass unless advised otherwise.
- Spouts or straws should usually be avoided as they make fluids more difficult to control.
- Avoid large mouthfuls.
- Try to avoid tipping your head backwards when eating and drinking.
- Try to concentrate, avoid talking when eating and drinking.
- For people that require assistance with feeding, it can be helpful to hold the cup/ spoon/ fork together known as 'hand over hand feeding'.
- Follow the food/ fluid consistencies advised by your Speech & Language Therapist.

## After Eating and Drinking

- Stay sitting upright for 30 minutes after eating.
- At the end of each meal make sure your mouth is empty.

## Top Tips

- Clean your mouth well to avoid bacteria growing. Brush your teeth, gums and tongue twice a day. Don't forget to clean your dentures thoroughly.
- If tablets are difficult for you to manage ask your Doctor or Pharmacist about alternative forms of medication.

## Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your swallowing, you can call the Speech and Language Therapy Department at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital on 01603 287117 0830-1630 Monday to Friday.