

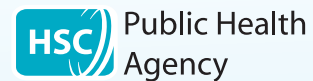
Resources to help:

- **Public Health Agency Dysphagia NI**
[Dysphagia resources | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- Online eSwallowing Awareness (Dysphagia) Training for health and social care staff that provides the knowledge to manage and support people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. You can access the training as follows:
 - **Trust Staff: Leadership Centre.**
[Dysphagia \(www.hsclearning.com\)](http://www.hsclearning.com)
 - **Nursing Homes:** by registration with HSC Learning
 - **NISCC staff directed via**
<https://learningzone.niscc.info/>
- **International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI)** - <https://iddsi.org>

**Be careful!
Be aware!
Keep everyone safe!**



Produced for the Public Health Agency,
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate)
www.publichealth.hscni.net



ARE YOU CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH EATING, DRINKING AND SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES?

What is my role and responsibility in supporting the safety of people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties?



What can you do to improve safety with food and drinks?

People with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties have complex healthcare needs. All staff must be able to recognise and communicate these needs with the wider team. It is your responsibility to ensure safe snacks, meals, drinks and serving processes are in place.

This leaflet has been developed in response to a Reminder of Best Practice Letter (SQR-SAI-2021-075 (OPS/MHS/AS) Risk of Serious Harm or Death from Choking on Foods and outlines your responsibilities as laid out in the recommendations.

All staff working with people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties:

- Find the person's most up-to-date Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) 'Eating, Drinking, Swallowing Recommendations Sheet' within their care plan and strictly follow the advice.
- Agreed systems must be in place to support the SLT Eating Drinking and Swallowing (EDS) recommendations. The agreed plan should be written down and shared with all staff.
- 'Nil by Mouth' alerts or signs should be clearly visible near the person who is 'Nil by Mouth'.
- You should highlight the needs of people with swallowing difficulties at important times. Information handover, meal and snack times, when moving between facilities, attending day centres or going out in the care of other people are important times to handover EDS information.
- Ensure all team members are aware of eating, drinking and swallowing needs by taking a 'SAFETY PAUSE' before serving food and drinks by each other "What patient safety issues for food and drinks do we need to be aware of today?"
- Ensure foods or fluids that pose a risk to individuals with EDS difficulties are stored securely.



Care & Catering Staff

- Complete recommended eSwallow Awareness Training and keep it up-to-date.
- Make sure you know the person's SLT EDS recommendations before serving or assisting with food and drinks.
- Make sure unsafe food and drinks are out of sight or out of reach of vulnerable people e.g. food on tea trolleys, nursing/admin stations and communal areas.
- Always check and be clear about the agreed/formal process for preparing, serving and delivering meals, drinks and snacks safely.
- Share eating, drinking and swallowing needs or concerns to all staff on duty with you and give verbal and written handover to other care/catering staff as appropriate to your role.
- Put a safety pause in place with your colleagues as part of the food and drinks serving process i.e. "What safety issues do we need to be aware of today?"



Managers

- Make sure all team members/staff have completed recommended eSwallow Awareness Training. This will help them identify and manage the needs of people with EDS difficulties. Keep a record of this training for your staff.
- Make sure Speech and Language Therapy 'EDS recommendations' are up to date, stored in the original format and kept where all staff can easily access the information.
- Introduce a formal process to serve and deliver meals, drinks and snacks safely. Clearly identify roles and responsibilities and include a SAFETY PAUSE. Systems should include domestic and catering staff.
- Ensure there is a process for sharing information about swallowing difficulties at critical times such as mealtimes/snack-times; upon transfer to other care settings and for outings.
- Ensure there are adequate, safe, storage facilities for food/drinks in communal areas.

