



## Eating and drinking with acknowledged risk (Feeding at risk)

### Department address and contact information:

Adult Speech and Language Therapy  
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There may be some instances where a person presents with a dysphagia (swallowing difficulty) which cannot be managed by modifying diet and fluids, and the risk of aspiration cannot be ruled out. This would mean that the person is eating and drinking with acknowledged risk, or 'feeding at risk'. This situation may also arise for people who have been deemed to have an unsafe swallow, however, have not wanted to have modified consistencies. These discussions usually involve the person, a speech and language therapist and the person's medical team.

### What does this mean?

- ❖ If a person is identified as eating and drinking with acknowledged risk, it means that the risk of aspiration (food and drink going the wrong way) **cannot be ruled out**.
- ❖ A person can be eating and drinking with acknowledged risk on **modified consistencies**; these are usually consistencies which have been found by a speech and language therapist to be the safest for that person, however, do not eliminate the risk.
- ❖ **This means that the person may cough when eating and drinking and may get recurrent chest infections.**

### What you can do to help:-

- ❖ Safe swallowing strategies should still be applied to this client group.
- ❖ Ensure the person is **upright** when eating and drinking and follow any specific strategies provided by the speech and language therapist to facilitate safe swallowing.
- ❖ Ensure you are giving the person the **current consistency** of diet and fluids (as outlined by the speech and language therapist).
- ❖ Ensure you use the **correct equipment** for the person and provide assistance if necessary.
- ❖ **Swilling and spitting** fluids of the person's choice may also be an option if the person becomes distressed by swallowing.

### When would a speech and language therapist referral be appropriate for this client group?

- ❖ Just because a person is eating and drinking with acknowledged risk, it does not mean that they would not be suitable for input from a speech and language therapist.
- ❖ If a person has been placed on eating and drinking with acknowledged risk recommendations and you notice an **increased difficulty** with these recommendations over time, contact a speech and language therapist for a reassessment. Swallowing can deteriorate over time and therefore further modifications can be trialled if necessary.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version, please ask a member of staff or email [interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk)