

Dysphagia, safe swallowing, and mealtime management

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline the procedures of supporting and managing clients who require a *Mealtime Preparation and Delivery (MPD)* plan.

This includes the safe deliver of meals to clients with dysphagia and managing the associated risks.

Definition

Mealtime Management

Mealtime Management is a method of providing support to a person who has difficulty eating or drinking safely or nutritiously because of the prevalence of malnutrition that results in underweight and obesity, and lack of nutrients. Difficulty in eating and drinking can be due to physical issues, oral health issues and dysphagia. In most cases issues which affect a person's ability to eat and drink put the person's life at risk.

Dysphagia

Dysphagia is the term used to describe a difficulty with swallowing. It refers to taking more time and effort to move food or liquid from the mouth to the stomach. Most people will occasionally have difficulty swallowing when food is taken in too fast or food isn't chewed enough, and this usually isn't a cause for concern but when dysphagia is persistent it can be treated with therapeutic intervention.

Nutrition and Swallowing Checklist

The Nutrition and Swallowing Checklist is a tool used to screen clients for difficulties relation to nutrition and swallowing. This done by Allied Health Professionals.

Mealtime Preparation and Delivery Plan

A Mealtime Management and Delivery plan is a plan which prescribes specific support recommendations for the person to eat and drink in a safe and nutritious way.

Enteral feeding and nutrition

Enteral feeding and nutrition are prescribed when it is not safe for the person to eat or drink orally or when their oral intake is not adequate to meet their nutritional requirements and is putting their life at risk. Enteral nutrition is the introduction of a nutritionally complete liquid

Procedure

Mealtime Preparation and Delivery (MPD) Plan

Clients who have nutrition and swallowing issues, dysphagia or require enteral feeding will have an MPD plan in place that addresses the nutrition for the client's health and wellbeing, how to manage dysphagia and enteral feeding if relevant.

Client's MPD plans will be developed in consultation with a medical practitioner and coordinated with external sources as required for example Dietician,

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Speech Pathologist, General Practitioner (GP), Dental Services, Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist. Clients, and their representatives where appropriate, will be supported and encouraged to be involved in the assessment and development of their MDP plan.

All mealtime management plan need to identify:

- Personal relevant biographic details
- Allergies and Medication routines
- Food and drink likes and dislikes
- Religious and cultural requirements
- Eating and drinking equipment
- Support needs for example time needs, seating, environment and so on
- Communication
- The things the participant likes to be involved in
- Eating out preferences; likes and dislikes

The MPD plan will also include a description of the condition, treatments, medications, management and associated risks and identify how risk, incidents and emergencies will be managed, including required actions and escalation to ensure client health and wellbeing.

The IDDSI framework consists of a continuum of 8 levels (0 - 7), where drinks are measured from Levels 0 - 4, while foods are measured from Levels 3 - 7. The IDDSI Framework provides a common terminology to describe food textures and drink thickness. Refer to chart on page 5.

MPD plan implementation

The client will be supported by support workers or nurses who are appropriately trained and skilled in following meal preparation and delivery procedures.

In understanding and working with clients who have an MPD plan, Support Workers will be directed to follow the management plan that has been developed by a health practitioner.

MPD plans requires attention to nutrition and hydration for health of clients who have requirements for specialist diets, evidence-based support for dysphagia and enteral feeding.

MPD management often has complexities of support needs when supporting individual's preferences and circumstances. It is acknowledged that mealtime is a pleasurable social experience for the individual. Clients will be supported to understand how 'duty of care' is considered before 'dignity of risk' in relation to their MPD plan.

Support Workers will receive training in the implementation of the plan from Subee Newlake registered nurse to follow meal preparation and delivery as per each client's individual plan. Subee Registered Nurse will make the decision about who should provide the support on a case by case basis to ensure that only Support Workers with the relevant skill set, training and capabilities are responsible for its delivery. This would include dysphagia competency training if necessary.

MPD plan monitoring and review

Clients who have nutrition and swallowing issues will

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have regular screening for dysphagia and if necessary, will be referred to members of a multidisciplinary team for a specialised assessment.

Their MPD plan will be reviewed regularly by the client's nominated health professional/s at a minimum of 6-month intervals, or at any time changes occur.

Support Worker capabilities

Staff training in the delivery of supports in line with MPD plans will be provided by a variety of methods e.g. accredited training, e-learning, seminars and in-house profession development training days.

All staff working with a client in mealtime preparation and delivery will be required to complete training relating specifically to each client's needs. This includes:

- understanding their regime
- competency in interpreting and implementing the management plans
- competency in identifying signs and symptoms of risks associated with eating and swallowing and other high risks.

In some cases, the support may need to be delivered by an appropriately qualified health practitioner or a person that has met the NDIS High Intensity Support Skills Descriptor for MPD procedures. This will be determined by the Registered Nurse.

Before commencing employment, staff are required to have a Cert III and current accredited First Aid Certificate.

Staff will be required to have a comprehensive understanding of risk factors and adverse outcome related to poor nutrition for all clients. Subee Newlake educates Support Workers in the regular monitoring for clients to prevent adverse outcomes as high rates of dysphagia in people with an intellectual disability or frail aged clients may result in aspiration, pulmonary infection and sometimes death.

Support Workers training will include appropriate positioning and posture and eating and drinking management for clients diagnosed with dysphagia to minimize risks.

F-CA-Dysphagia Management

Support Workers Responsibilities

Support Workers will be required to complete training related specifically to each client's needs, regarding the MPD plan, the risks associated with each client's specific condition, understanding the nutritional risks for people with disability, the outcome of poor nutrition and what to do in case of an emergency and when to contact emergency services.

Support workers are responsible to observe and monitor a person's health and wellbeing on a day-to-day basis and support the client to follow the medical practitioner's recommendation to maintain good health and wellbeing.

Support Workers may need to advocate for the client during health assessments to assist them to communicate their health concerns to the GP. It is important to note that advocating for the client does not mean making health decision.

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Where possible the Registered Nurse is to present the MPD plan in a format that assists the client and or their family to lead and direct their own health planning.

Support Workers must have an understanding why adequate hydration and nutrition is a requirement, variables that can hinder adequate hydration and nutrition, the role of professionals in the mealtime management plans, the accurate documentation and reporting on the implementation of the Plan as well as working to make sure the experience of eating and hydration is a pleasurable social experience for the individual participant.

They must also be able to identify and manage risks that are often associated with clients requiring MPD plans and clients with dysphagia.

Refer to clients choking and aspiration care plan.

Risk Identification and Management

Support Worker will monitor and identify any changes in the client's state of wellbeing through shift observations, maintaining records and following procedures diligently. The Support Worker will report through incident reporting and shift progress notes about any changes. Changes that will be recorded include, but are not limited to, loss or gain of weight on monthly weight charts, changes in facial colour and appearance, an elevated temperature, changes in respirations, refusal of food, participant likes and dislikes, any coughing or choking during eating or drinking and any indication that the client is unwell. Each client will also have individual differences and the Individual Support Plan will detail these, as well as be considered and changes noted at each stage of

review.

Emergency identification and management

Support Workers must use their knowledge and experience with First Aid to activate a response in an emergency. At all times the safety and wellbeing of the participant is the primary action.

As soon as practical the Service coordinator or registered nurse, during regular business hours, or Emergency After Hours if outside regular business hours, should be contact to advise of emergency incident occurrence. The Service Coordinator, RN or Emergency After Hours will provide support as well as arrange for additional Support Workers that may be required, such as when a client needs to go to the Emergency Department.

Responsibility and Authority

The Clinical Team Leader has responsibility and authority to ensure this Policy is followed.

The Subee Newlake registered nurses are responsible for enforcing the necessary training competencies.

All employees are responsible for knowing and following this Policy and Procedure.

Employees have a duty of care to clients under the mentioned acts and standards as well as under state and federal law.

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Safe Food Handling

Helpful Resources

Altura Modules:

Activities of Daily Living: Hydration and Nutrition

Clinical Skills: Managing Enteral Feeding and

Nutrition Australia:

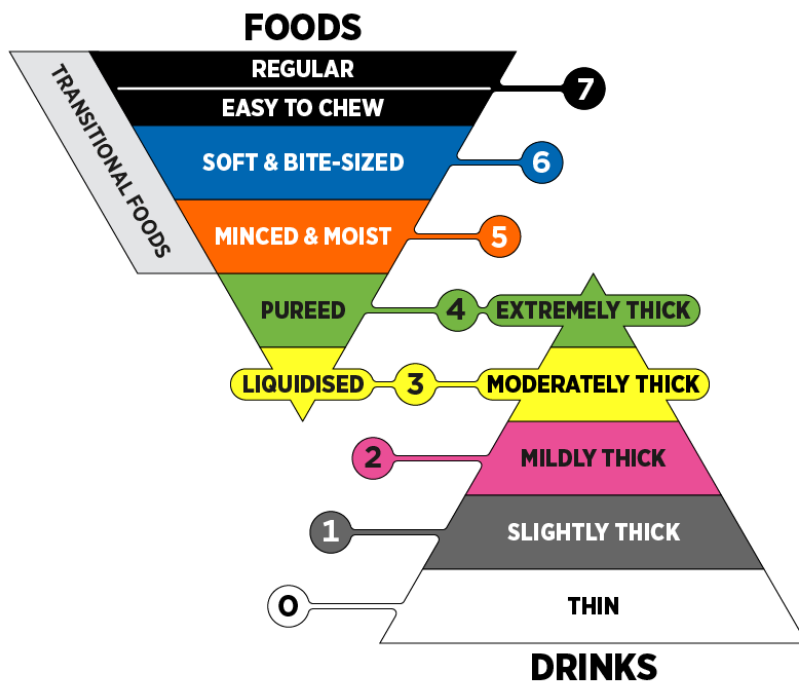
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/nutrition-and-older-adults>

WHO - Meeting the nutritional needs of Older Persons:

<http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/olderpersons/en/>

The IDDSI Framework

Providing a common terminology for describing food textures and drink thicknesses to improve safety for individuals with swallowing difficulties.



© The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative 2019 @ <https://iddsi.org/framework/>

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