

# Core Module Manual

Full Care Lifetime

## Safe Swallowing and Mealtime Management Policy

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Full Care Lifetime staff identify and manage dysphagia to prevent serious health risks such as choking, aspiration pneumonia, malnutrition, and dehydration.

This policy and procedure apply to all staff and meet relevant legislation, regulations, and standards. It should be read in conjunction with the Full Care Lifetime Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure.

### POLICY

This policy outlines the approach to managing dysphagia and ensuring safe swallowing and mealtime practices. The goal is to promote a safe mealtime environment by following appropriate procedures and maintaining awareness of potential risks.

We are dedicated to:

- Maintaining an understanding of Mealtime Management Plans
- Ensuring staff are aware of appropriate dysphagia management procedures
- Supporting the development and implementation of plans as needed
- Promoting a safe mealtime environment
- Ensuring all individuals, if applicable, are informed and empowered to follow their Mealtime Management Plans
- Encouraging participants to be involved in the assessment and development of their plans with their consent
- Monitoring and managing any emerging or chronic health risks related to swallowing difficulties

### PROCEDURES

- Appropriately qualified health practitioners, such as speech pathologists, may conduct assessments and develop personalized Mealtime Management Plans when required.
- Dietitians may provide recommendations to ensure adequate nutrition and hydration.
- Plans will include recommendations on food textures, fluid thickness, posture during meals, and required support.
- Assessments and plans will be reviewed regularly or when changes are noted.
- Relevant staff will receive training on implementing Mealtime Management Plans.
- Training will cover safe swallowing techniques, recognizing signs of choking or aspiration, and responding to emergencies.
- Staff will be trained to prepare and provide meals that are both safe and enjoyable, aligned with dietary recommendations and participant preferences.
- Training will include identifying and managing emerging health risks associated with dysphagia.
- Staff will follow the Mealtime Management Plans during all meals and snacks, if applicable.
- Any concerns or observed difficulties in swallowing will be promptly reported to the relevant health professionals.
- Plans will be reviewed regularly by health professionals and adjusted as needed.

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- Reviews may occur more frequently if the participant's needs change or issues are observed.
- Staff will be trained in recognizing and managing choking incidents.
- In case of choking, staff will follow emergency procedures and call an ambulance if necessary.
- Incident reports will be completed, and follow-up actions will be taken to prevent recurrence.
- Staff will ensure that meals are prepared and served in accordance with the participant's Mealttime Management Plan.
- Texture-modified foods and fluids will be prepared correctly and checked for accuracy.
- Meals will be stored safely, labeled, and differentiated to prevent cross-contamination.
- Participants will receive meals that meet their preferences, dietary needs, and any medical recommendations.
- Management: Ensure staff are trained and competent in dysphagia management. Conduct regular audits to ensure best practices.
- Support Workers: Follow Mealttime Management Plans diligently, monitor individuals during meals, and report concerns promptly.
- Health Professionals: Develop, review, and update Mealttime Management Plans. Provide training and guidance as needed.

### Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of mealttime management practices may include regular audits and reviews to ensure adherence to plans and identify areas for improvement. Feedback from staff, participants, and health professionals may be considered during the review process to make necessary adjustments. Incident reports and observations may be reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of current plans and procedures. Management may ensure ongoing education and refresher training for staff to maintain knowledge and competence in mealttime management.