

Thursday, 21 May 2020

[Allied Health Professions](#)

HSC Health and Social Care

Swallow Aware Eating, drinking and swallowing during COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Advice for staff supporting residents in care homes

People may have trouble with eating, drinking and swallowing if they develop COVID-19

- The difficulties may present as increased coughing, choking, chest infections or pneumonia.
- When we eat and drink we need to be able to coordinate our breathing with our swallow.
- At the point of swallowing we automatically hold our breath momentarily.
- If a person has COVID-19 symptoms or general weakness related to the virus, they may have more difficulty coordinating breathing and swallowing.
- This may increase the person's risk of aspiration and/ or choking.
- Aspiration may increase the person's risk of chest infections or pneumonia.

When people are unwell during COVID-19, they may have symptoms that make it harder for them to eat and drink:

- Coughing or shortness of breath
- Chest infections or nasal congestion
- Increased weakness and fatigue
- Increased confusion or delirium

They may also have a pre-existing difficulty with swallowing, eating and drinking and have been seen by a Speech and Language Therapist for assessment. They may have an SLT Swallowing care plan.

It is likely to take a while for people who have COVID-19 to build up to their previous daily oral intake.

They may prefer to take an easier texture of food than they usually take.

When helping someone to eat and drink, there are some tips that you can do to make it easier for him or her.

Developed by Speech and Language Therapists, this document offers advice for care home staff to support residents with COVID-19, who may have trouble with eating, drinking and swallowing.

Additional information

This was distributed to all care homes in Northern Ireland.

Details

Format

A4, 4 page booklet

Target group

Health professionals, care homes

Downloads

Attachment	Size
Eating drinking and swallowing during COVID-19 April 2020 final.pdf	376.94 KB

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