



ABIOS

Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service

FACTSHEET: Dysphagia or Swallowing

Audience: Family and Support Workers

For further information contact the
Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS)

Ph: (07) 3176 9506

Email: abios@health.qld.gov.au

Top tips to help someone with a swallowing difficulty:

- ☒ Reduce background noise and distractions
- ☒ Meals may need to be supervised
- ☒ During meals, the person should be sitting supported, in an upright position.
- ☒ The person should eat slowly, one mouthful at a time. Make sure that each mouthful is swallowed before the next one is taken.
- ☒ Encourage the person to cough between mouthfuls to make sure his/her throat is clear
- ☒ Follow any specific instructions provided by a health professional. E.g. turning the person's head a certain way while they swallow, using a specific utensil, positioning of their body, etc
- ☒ If the person is having obvious difficulty with the meal, stop and seek medical advice from a Speech Pathologist or doctor
- ☒ The person should sit up ½ hour after every meal
- ☒ Ensure good oral hygiene-the person's mouth should be clear of all food after meals and teeth should be brushed regularly
- ☒ Specialised adaptive equipment can be purchased to promote maximum safety and independence

(Adapted from the Speech Pathology Department, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane QLD)

