

## Lesson 1: Introduction

- People need to eat enough food and drink enough water every day to be healthy. When a person cannot eat or drink enough or do so safely, different problems can occur. The person could become dehydrated, ill and lose weight.
- Eating and drinking safely means food and drink can be chewed and swallowed into the stomach. Further assessment is needed if food becomes stuck in the airway (choking) or if food or drink goes down the airway into the lungs (aspirating).
- Safe eating and drinking uses physical, visual and thinking skills.
- **Physical skills** enable a person to:
  - Use hands and arms to pick up cutlery and food
  - Use hands and arms to bring food and drink to the mouth
  - Use mouth muscles to chew and swallow food
- **Vision skills** enable a person to
  - Know where their cutlery and plate is
  - Find food on their plate
- **Thinking skills** enable a person to
  - Plan their meal
  - Remember to eat and drink.
- **TAP eating and drinking aids** include:
  - Non-slip matting
  - Modified cutlery
  - Modified plates
  - Cuff
  - Modified cups
- **Eating and drinking strategies** include:
  - Position of person, chair and surface
  - Position of food and drink, and eating and drinking aids
  - Strategies for vision
  - Strategies for thinking
  - Food side and texture.

## Lesson 2: Select

Assessment lets you find out whether eating and drinking products will assist the person. It includes:

- Information about the person
- An eating and drinking screen to see if the person can swallow safely:
  - Sitting upright and holding head upright (with or without support)
  - Chewing and swallowing food and liquids without coughing or choking
  - Eating and drinking without pain, slipping from nose or mouth, or getting out of breath
- Assessment of health and nutrition risks about:
  - Weight and appetite
  - Airway and breathing
- **Warning!** If anyone reports difficulties with the eating and drinking screen, stop the assessment and refer to a health professional or rehabilitation service
- **Warning!** If anyone reports, health and nutrition risks, complete the assessment and also refer to a health professional for a health check

- Difficulties eating and drinking:
  - Physical difficulties
  - Vision difficulties
  - Thinking difficulties
- Use the TAP Eating and drinking aids selection table to find appropriate eating and drinking aids to try with the person.

## Lesson 3: Fit

- Check the eating or drinking product is in good working order
- Check the eating or drinking aid is the right size and type for the person
- Think about positioning and different food and drink to try with the person and caregivers.

## Lesson 4: Use

Give advice on how to safely use and look after the product. This includes:

- Teaching a person and/or the caregiver how to use their eating and drinking aids:
  - Pick up and put on the eating or drinking aid themselves, or with assistance
  - Use the product to move food and form it into bite size mouthfuls
  - Put down and take off the eating or drinking aid themselves, or with assistance
- Cleaning and looking after the eating and drinking aids includes:
  - Washing and drying with detergent
  - Don't leave the product in the sun
  - Check for cracks / sharp edges
  - Check for loose bits, especially that can be swallowed.

## Lesson 5: Follow-up

- Select a follow up time based on your assessment
- Complete a follow up appointment
  - Check the product is in good working order
  - Check that the eating and drinking aids are being used, and supporting safe eating and drinking
  - Check no risk signs, such as increase in chest infections, coughing or choking.
  - Check the product is suitable and continues to meet the person's needs.