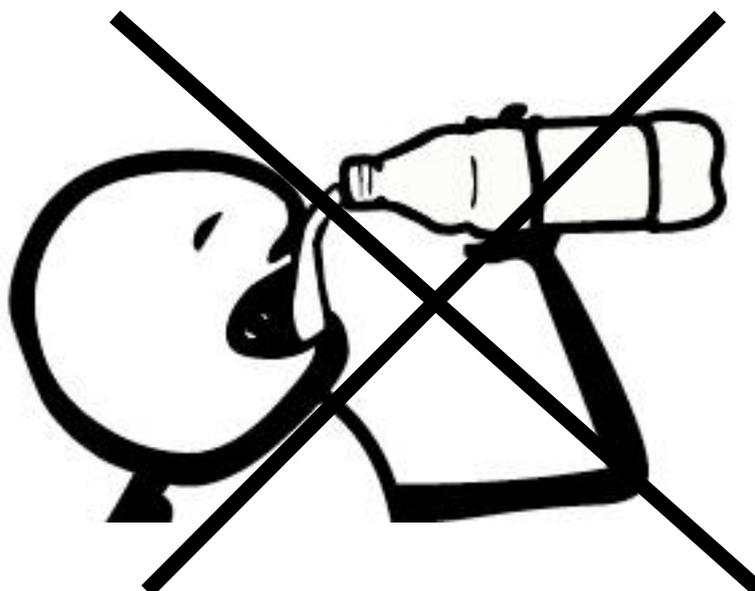


Patient Information

## Nutrition and Dietetics & Speech and Language Therapy

### Swallowing difficulties- no oral fluids

This leaflet provides information for people who have swallowing difficulties and have been advised to avoid oral fluids.



Your dietitian is: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: 024 7696 6161

Your speech and language therapist is: \_\_\_\_\_

Inpatient: Telephone number: 024 7696 5709



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**Community:** Telephone number: 024 7696 1010

If you are outside of Coventry, please contact your GP.

Some foods have a high fluid content and therefore may not be safe for you to eat.

This information offers advice on foods you need to avoid, practical steps for coping with a dry mouth, and advice to make sure your mouth care remains at its best whilst you are unable to take oral fluids.

## Potential problems arising from swallowing difficulties

If there is a breakdown in the normal swallowing process, there is a risk that food or liquids can pass into your lungs instead of your stomach. This is called aspiration, and can lead to the development of a chest infection or pneumonia.

The advice given to you by the speech and language therapist will help avoid this, so it is very important that you follow their advice. If you feel you are still having problems or feel your swallowing difficulties are making you unwell, please contact your speech and language therapist or GP as soon as possible.

## How will I hydrate myself?

Your dietitian will ensure you receive adequate fluids, most commonly via a PEG tube (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy). A PEG tube is a special plastic tube that is inserted into your stomach via your abdomen to give you feed and/or fluids. A PEG tube is usually inserted if you have swallowing problems.

## What foods do I need to avoid?

- Avoid foods with a high fluid content such as soup, ice-lollies and ice-cream. Ice lollies and ice-cream melt to a normal fluid consistency in the mouth.

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- It is best to avoid foods that can separate out or have mixed textures. For example, roast dinner with gravy, stews or casseroles, sponge and custard, un-drained tinned fruit and cereals with milk where the milk is not absorbed.

Cereals where all the milk is absorbed are safe to eat, for example Ready Brek or Weetabix\*.

\*Make sure Weetabix is smooth and lump free. The Weetabix should resemble the same consistency as your puree meals.

**Remember**, any fluid in the food you eat should be as thick as the food itself.

## Coping with a dry mouth/quenching your thirst

- Specialist gels, mouth rinses and toothpastes such as **Biotène®** or **BioXtra** are available from chemists or from your GP.
- If you can eat a **normal texture** diet, try eating crisp cold vegetables such as pepper, carrot and celery sticks and sliced apple as these can be refreshing.
- Juicy fruits such as pineapple, soft pears, peaches, oranges or grapes **are not suitable** due to the thin fluid they produce.
- Try chewing sugar free gum or sucking on sugar free mints. Be aware that these can contain the sweetener sorbitol. It is important to be aware of this as sorbitol can have a laxative effect if taken in large amounts
- You may find some foods are stickier in your mouth, making them difficult to swallow. These include pastry, chocolate, fresh white bread and mashed potato. These could increase your thirst and make your mouth drier.
- Salt and salty foods can also make you thirsty. To reduce this, try to avoid or use less processed foods / ready meals, smoked and cured meat or fish, tinned food in brine or salt water, salted snacks and stock cubes. Avoid adding salt during cooking or at the table.

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### Oral care

- It is important to keep your mouth clean to maintain your oral health
- You can continue to brush your teeth, gums and tongue twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, especially last thing at night, but you must ensure that you **do not** swallow any fluids whilst doing so.

Lip balms or water-based creams such as aqueous or aqua gel can help with dry lips, **not** petroleum jelly-based products such as Vaseline.

### Medications

Try to take medicines with food where possible, for example with smooth thick yoghurt.

### Additional information

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice and information.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

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