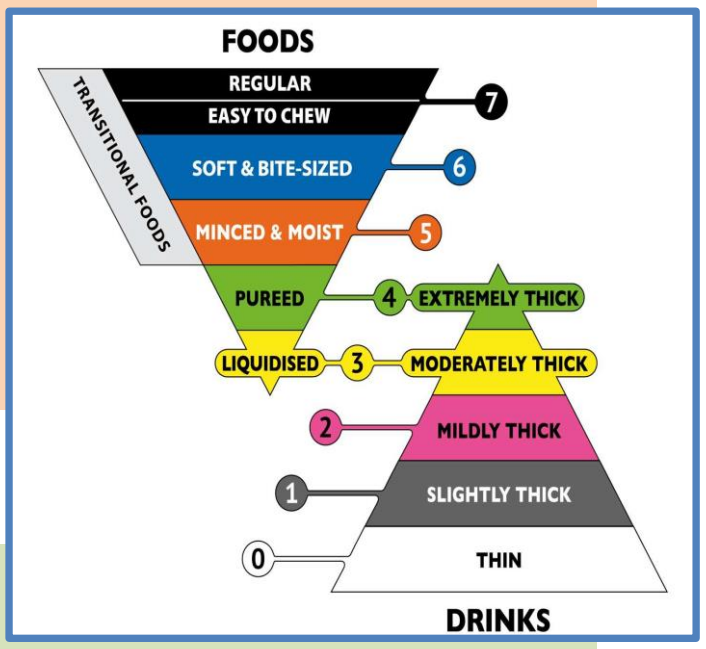
Assisting people to eat and drink safely

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

1. Before

- ✓ Follow SLT Care Plan (if the person has one)
- ✓ Ensure you have the appropriate utensils, cup, plate etc
- ✓ Don’t forget glasses, hearing aids, dentures (if usually worn when eating)
- ✓ Ensure food is the correct prescribed IDDSI level and particle size
- ✓ Check mouth is clear before starting a meal
- ✓ Ensure the food is the correct temperature
- ✓ Only offer food when as upright as possible
- ✓ Ensure the person is fully alert
- ✓ Keep distractions to a minimum



2. During

- ✓ Check the person is ready to eat
- ✓ Tell the person what you are doing and what the food is
- ✓ Encourage people to avoid talking when eating
- ✓ Always give appropriate time
- ✓ Independence should be encouraged but ensure assistance is available
- ✓ Ensure mouthful size is appropriate (as per SLT care plan)
- ✓ Always ensure the mouthful is swallowed before offering the next
- ✓ Offering a verbal prompt to swallow or an empty spoon can help trigger a swallow

3. After

- ✓ Clean mouth / teeth after meals and ensure mouth is free from residue
- ✓ Remain upright for 30 minutes after a meal to avoid reflux

If you require any further advice please telephone the Adult Speech and Language Therapy Service on 01823 617464

outstanding care
listening and leading
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