

# **COMMUNITY SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY**

## **GENERAL ADVICE FOR EATING AND DRINKING**

### **AFTER COVID -19**



## **POST VIRAL MANAGEMENT– COVID-19**

This general advice leaflet outlines **simple suggestions to make eating, drinking and swallowing easier** during your recovery from COVID-19.

Common symptoms which you may experience when recovering from COVID-19 are:

- Post-viral fatigue (experienced for some time during recovery)
- General decline in overall function

Older people, particularly with multiple medical conditions and less effective immune systems are more likely to experience these symptoms.

During recovery, these symptoms can impact on a number of areas:

- Mobility
- Independence in activities of daily living
- Eating and drinking (most common if you have been intubated to help you breathe during a hospital admission for COVID-19)
- Weight and appetite (including changes in your sense of taste /smell)

The following strategies aim to support you to manage the fatigue you will be experiencing whilst trying to make sure you get enough to eat and drink each day:

- Make sure you are **sitting in an upright and supported position** for all meals, snacks and drinks.
- **Schedule your snacks, drinks and medications when you feel at your most alert.**
- Take **smaller, more frequent meals and snacks throughout the day. Try to include nourishing drinks**, such as smoothies, milkshakes or hot milky drinks like hot chocolate or Horlicks.
- Take **small mouthfuls**, and **take your time to chew well** before swallowing.
- **Cut food into bite-size pieces** to make mouthfuls easier to chew.
- **Consider adding sauce or gravy for a more moist consistency**, which may be easier to swallow.

- **Consider taking softer foods which are easier to chew and swallow.** For example:
  - Try poached fish in a sauce with mashed potatoes rather than battered fish and chips,
  - Try stewed apples instead of a crunchy apple,
  - Consider dunking your crumbly biscuit in a warm drink to soften and moisten it.
- **You may need help from someone to eat and drink** for the times when it is particularly effortful for you to do this yourself during your recovery.
- **Take tablets one at a time – they may go over easier with a teaspoon of yoghurt, mousse, custard or jam.**  
(Talk to your GP or Pharmacist if you are having difficulties in swallowing particular tablets as there may be a different form you could take e.g. liquid).
- It is important to **keep your mouth and teeth clean** regardless of how much you are eating and drinking. (This will reduce the bacteria which can build up in your mouth and keeps everything fresh and comfortable).
- **Sitting upright for around 30 minutes after a meal** can help with digestion and reduce the risks of reflux.

Remember, everyone's recovery will be different.

If you are concerned about your eating, drinking or swallowing, or you are unsure which of the above suggestions are the most appropriate for you, then please contact the **Duty Speech and Language Therapy Advice Line on 01224 558 377.**