

# MSAC - SAFE SWALLOWING STRATEGIES

## DO ✓

- Concentrate when swallowing and avoid talking whilst eating/drinking
- Always eat in an upright position (sitting out of bed in a chair is best). You should never eat or drink while lying down.
- Cut food into small pieces and chew thoroughly before swallowing, and have small mouthfuls
- If there is any sensation of food sticking in the throat, swallow and cough to clear it away. Avoid that food type or make it softer.
- Try alternating one sip of water/drink with one mouthful of food during your meal.
- If your voice becomes gurgly when swallowing –swallow again or cough to clear it. Contact a Speech Pathologist for a review.
- Always sit upright for approximately 20-30 minutes after a meal

## DON'T ✗

- Don't throw your head back when swallowing, instead dip your chin down and have head slightly flexed forward

- Don't rush when swallowing, finish each mouthful before starting the next
- Don't continue eating/drinking if you:
  - Become drowsy
  - Start coughing and cannot swallow
  - Have a persistent gurgly or wet voice
  - Seek review by a Speech Pathologist

## When taking medication:

- If tablets can be broken, break them into smaller pieces, or crush them into some puree, yoghurt or custard wherever possible.
  - ***NB: Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before crushing tablets as it may affect their absorption.***
- If tablets cannot be broken, take them in a big spoonful of puree, yoghurt, custard, or jam.
- Drink lots of water to flush the tablets down.
- If you are still having difficulty taking your medication, ask your pharmacist about whether your tablets can be swapped to those of a smaller size, or for medicine in liquid form.