



# Mealtime and Dysphagia Support Policy, Guidelines & Framework

## Current Version

<b>Service Area</b>	Disability, Aged, Community	<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Process Owner</b>	Governance Lead   CEO   COO	<b>Date of Issue</b>	May 2023
<b>Approved by</b>	Chief Executive Officer	<b>Review</b>	May 2025

## Modification History

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Description of change
1.0	10/2022	Stacey Madden	CEO	New policy

## In conjunction with:

- All NCC Policies

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## Mealtime Support

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

To best support each participant requiring appropriate and timely assistance with meal support including severe dysphagia management. Participant to receive appropriate support that is relevant and proportionate to their individual needs and preferences.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all service delivery employees of National.

### **POLICY**

Each participant requiring mealtime management receives meals that are nutritious, and of a texture that is appropriate to their individual needs, and appropriately planned, and prepared in an environment and manner that meets their individual needs, preferences and delivered in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs and ensures that the meals are enjoyable and inclusive of client choice and control.

To achieve this outcome, the following indicators should be demonstrated:

- Providers identify each participant requiring mealtime management.
- Each participant requiring mealtime management has their individual mealtime management needs assessed by appropriately qualified health practitioners, including by practitioners:
  - a) undertaking comprehensive assessments of their nutrition and swallowing; and
  - b) assessing their seating and positioning requirements for eating and drinking; and
  - c) providing mealtime management plans which outline their mealtime management needs, including for swallowing, eating and drinking; and
  - d) reviewing assessments and plans annually or in accordance with the professional advice of the participant's practitioner, or more frequently if needs change or difficulty is observed.
- With their consent, each participant requiring mealtime management is involved in the assessment and development of their mealtime management plans.
- Each worker responsible for providing mealtime management to participants understands the mealtime management needs of those participants and the steps to take if safety incidents occur during meals, such as coughing or choking on food or fluids.
- Each worker responsible for providing mealtime management to participants is trained in preparing and providing safe meals with participants that would reasonably be expected to be enjoyable and proactively managing emerging and chronic health risks related to mealtime difficulties, including how to seek help to manage such risks.
- Mealtime management plans for participants are available where mealtime management is provided to them and are easily accessible to workers providing mealtime management to them.
- Effective planning is in place to develop menus with each participant requiring mealtime management to support them to:



a) be provided with nutritious meals that would reasonably be expected to be enjoyable, reflecting their preferences, their informed choice and any recommendations by an appropriately qualified health practitioner that are reflected in their mealtime management plan; and

b) if they have chronic health risks (such as swallowing difficulties, diabetes, anaphylaxis, food allergies, obesity or being underweight) – proactively manage those risks.

- Procedures are in place for workers to prepare and provide texture-modified foods and fluids in accordance with mealtime management plans for participants and to check that meals for participants are of the correct texture, as identified in the plans.
- Meals that may be provided to participants requiring mealtime management are stored safely and in accordance with health standards, can be easily identified as meals to be provided to participants and can be differentiated from meals not to be provided to particular participants.

## Severe Dysphagia Management

Each identified participant requiring severe dysphagia management should be involved in the assessment and development of their severe dysphagia management plan with the appropriate allied health professionals (Speech Pathologist / Dietician) The participants plan should identify the following:

- their individual needs and preferences (such as for food, fluids, preparation techniques and feeding equipment); and
- how risks, incidents and emergencies will be managed to ensure their wellbeing and safety, including by setting out any required actions and plans for escalation.

### TRAINING

Each worker responsible for providing severe dysphagia management to participants is required to undertake annual generalised dysphagia training and understand each participant's needs, managing any severe dysphagia related incident and the high intensity support skills descriptor for severe dysphagia management. Worker to understand who to upline concerns with and who is responsible for plan reviews.