



## NEWSLETTER - Winter 2017

Winter has arrived with a vengeance – which prompted us to send out our latest newsletter! Anna Daniels attended the Speech Pathology National Conference in Sydney in May. There was a full program of interesting presentations and Anna has selected some important information the new terminology for modified consistency diet and fluids to share. We also discuss some pros and cons of different drinking cups and about the challenge of correctly thickening supplement drinks. Finally we have provided some communication tips for individuals with late-stage dementia.

**COMMUNICATION IN LATE STAGE DEMENTIA**

Advanced dementia is the term given to the late stages of dementia in which cognitive abilities have declined to the point that verbal communication is no longer possible.

The importance of communication throughout the person's journey shouldn't change as alternative forms of communication or stimulation can be adopted in order to connect with the person with dementia.

Here are a few examples of ways to provide communication opportunities. This is certainly not an exhaustive list.

**SMELL REMINISCENCE** Aromas can trigger memories. Scents and smells can create a link and bring back reassuring memories of times gone by (for example, the aroma of baked bread or a favourite perfume or flowers).

**VISION REMINISCENCE** A family photograph or a picture of a favourite view can produce a reaction – perhaps encouraging the person to open their eyes and reach out. You could look at paintings or objects in their room.

**TOUCH** Holding hands, stroking a person's face or arms, or brushing their hair can be soothing and be pivotal in making a connection. Alternatively, touching objects, feeling textures or finger painting are all ways to generate conversation.

**MUSIC** Play the music your loved one enjoys as this can bring back happy memories. Music can lead to finger or foot tapping, a smile, perhaps a tear or in other cases people will sing along. Often people with dementia who stopped speaking a long time ago can sing along to a familiar tune, remembering some of the words.

**HOT OFF THE PRESS – An update on the IDDSI**

The international Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) arose from a plan to create a **global standard** of terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids used **for all individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all care settings, and for all cultures**. This is to minimise miscommunication and confusion regarding diet textures and drink consistencies at an international level.

The boards of Speech Pathology Australia and Dietitians Association of Australia have now agreed to endorse this framework within Australia. **The Australian adoption of the new system will occur on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019**. The IDDSI team are currently working to build awareness of the impending changes for those who will be affected. Further preparation for the implementation will commence in 2018. Australian clinicians are asked to continue to use the current Australian Standards for Texture Modified Foods and Fluids in the meantime.



## SO MANY CUPS – WHICH TO CHOOSE??

Spouted cups, cut-out cups and cups that regulate the amount of liquid per sip are just a few of the different types of cups that are available to assist people with dysphagia to drink more safely and easily. We have highlighted some of the advantages of each cup in the table below, but there is definitely no “one cup suits all”. **Certain features of each cup may create risks for certain individuals with dysphagia and may actually make it more difficult for them to manage!** For example, a spouted cup may not be useful for residents with a slow swallow trigger (as people often extend their head/neck when drinking from a spouted lid, causing the airway to be more open and the muscles to work harder, increasing aspiration risk). Drinking aids should therefore be used with caution and clear rationale and we recommend consulting a speech pathologist before buying or using any adaptive equipment for dysphagia. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

REGULAR CUP (NO LID)	CUT-OUT CUP	CUPS THAT REGULATE THE AMOUNT OF LIQUID PER SIP	SPOUT CUP
 <p>Often a cup without a lid is an effective option for residents with dysphagia. The ‘no lid’ option assists those with difficulty coordinating the sucking / swallowing process which is required to effectively drink from straws/spouts. It is also a very natural way of drinking.</p>	 <p>These cups are designed with a cut-out space for the nose when the cup is tipped, reducing the need to tilt your head back whilst drinking. They are also useful for residents with reduced head/neck mobility.</p>	 <p>Cups such as ‘Provale’ or the ‘Rose cup’ regulate the amount of liquid in each sip; allowing a manageable bolus size with every drinking motion (preventing gulping). This may give the person with dysphagia more control of the liquid bolus.</p>	 <p>Spout cups are useful to reduce spillage and promote independence when drinking. They help deliver liquid to the middle of the mouth which can be useful for people with slow or weak tongue movement or poor lip seal.</p>

## THICKENING SUPPLEMENT DRINKS?

In our experience, some supplements appear not to thicken or to thicken very slowly even after a significant amount of thickener powder has been added. They may also continue to thicken over time.

We have recently spoken to representatives of some thickener products and it is clear that not all thickening products can reliably thicken all supplement drinks. This is largely due to the different chemical make-up of products.

While some thickener products come with instructions for thickening various supplements, these will be most reliable if the thickener and supplement are both made from the same company. (Guidelines produced by an outside company may be less reliable). There are also some pre-packaged supplements on the market which are already thickened to different levels of thickened fluids.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT THIS?

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback we suggest you speak to the representative for the particular thickener product used by your facility. You are welcome to contact us too to discuss further.

You may also like to contact your dietician to discuss any alternative approaches for nutritional supplements.

Most importantly, please ensure that all drinks are thickened appropriately for those residents who have been prescribed thickened fluids.

### ★ BAROSSA VILLAGE AWARD ★

CONGRATULATIONS to **Vitish Gudoy** and his colleagues at **Barossa Village Inc** for winning the **Innovation in Service Award** at the **2017 ACSA** (Aged & Community Services Australia) **SA & NT Awards** for his project **“FOODS WITH A BITE FOR DYSPHAGIA!”** (And thank you from Wendy Forster, Adult Speech Pathology, for the opportunity to be involved in the project as well).

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