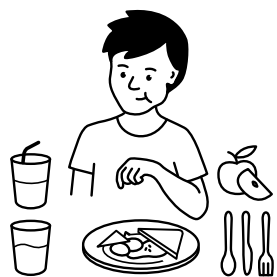
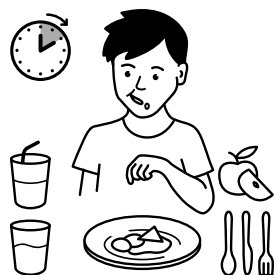


# Eating and Drinking Ability Classification System from 3 years: descriptors and illustrations



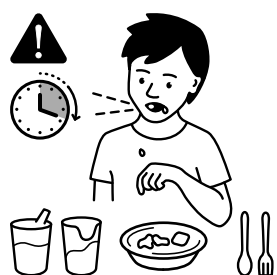
## EDACS Level I - Eats and drinks safely and efficiently

• Eats a wide range of different texture foods that are age appropriate • May be challenged by some very firm bite and chew foods • Moves food from one side of the mouth to the other; may close lips whilst chewing • Drinks thin or thick fluids from range of cups with consecutive swallows, including through a straw • May cough or gag for very challenging textures • Eats and drinks at a similar speed to peers • Retains most food or fluid in the mouth • Clears food from most tooth surfaces and dislodges most foods from the sides of the mouth.



## EDACS Level II - Eats and drinks safely but with some limitations to efficiency

• Eats a range of food textures that are age appropriate • Challenged by some firm bite, effortful chew, mixed and sticky textures • Moves food slowly from one side of the mouth to the other using the tongue • May chew with lips open • Drinks thin or thick fluids from most cups with consecutive swallows; may drink through a straw • Coughs or gags on new or challenging textures or when tiring • May sometimes cough if fluid is fast flowing or large quantity taken in the mouth • May tire if textures challenging and mealtimes will take longer than for peers • Loses small amounts of food or fluid especially challenging textures • Some foods will collect on some tooth surfaces and between cheeks and gums.



## EDACS Level III - Eats and drinks with some limitations to safety; there may be limitations to efficiency

• Eats puree and mashed food and may bite and chew some soft chew food textures • Challenged by large lumps, firm bite and effortful chew textures which may lead to choking and reduced efficiency • It is challenging to move food from one side of the mouth to the other, to keep food in the mouth, and to bite and chew for safe eating • Eating and drinking performance is variable and depends upon overall physical ability, positioning or assistance given • May drink from an open cup but drinking from cup with a lid or spout may be required to control the flow of fluid • May drink thickened fluids more easily than thin and may need time between sips • May choose to drink only in certain situations such as with a trusted carer or with no distractions • Specific food textures and positioning of food in mouth are required to reduce the risk of choking • May cough or aspirate if fluid is fast flowing or large quantity taken in the mouth • May tire whilst eating if food requires chewing and mealtimes will be prolonged • Food and fluid loss is likely and food will collect on tooth surfaces, roof of the mouth and between cheeks and gums.



## EDACS Level IV - Eats and drinks with significant limitations to safety

• Eats smooth purees or well mashed food • Challenged by food that requires chewing; choking may occur if lumps are eaten • May at times be difficult to co-ordinate swallowing and breathing when eating and drinking as shown by signs of aspiration • It is challenging to control the movement of food and fluid in the mouth, to control mouth opening and closure, and to control swallowing, biting and chewing • May swallow lumps whole • May find it easier to drink thickened fluids than thin fluids; thickened fluids taken slowly and in small quantities from an open cup may increase control whilst drinking • May choose not to drink fluids or to drink only in certain situations such as with trusted carer • Likely to need time between mouthfuls to swallow repeatedly before continuing • Will require specific food textures, fluid consistency, techniques, skilled carers, positioning and modified environment to reduce risks of aspiration and choking and increase efficiency • May tire whilst eating and mealtimes are likely to be prolonged • Significant food and fluid loss from the mouth • Food may become stuck on tooth surfaces, roof of the mouth and between teeth and gums • Supplementary tube feeding may be considered.



## EDACS Level V - Unable to eat or drink safely – tube feeding may be considered to provide nutrition

• May manage very small tastes or flavours • Ability to manage small tastes and flavours will be affected by positioning, personal factors and environmental features • Unable to swallow food or drink safely due to limitations to the range and co-ordination of movement for swallowing and breathing • It is likely to be challenging to control mouth opening and tongue movement • Aspiration and choking are very likely • Harm from aspiration is evident • May require suction or medication to keep airway clear of secretions • Alternative means of providing nutrition such as tube feeding may be considered.