

Utensils for drinking

Very often, coughing is caused by the type of cup/utensil that is used. **It is important to try different utensils before changing thickness of drinks**, as this often solves the problem.

Reasons why the wrong utensil can cause coughing/aspiration:

- It allows a person to take large mouthfuls/sips.
- It allows a person to take consecutive gulps without taking a breath.
- It directs fluid to the back of the mouth and into the throat before swallowing muscles have got into position.
- It causes the head to tilt backwards (particularly at the end of the drink) which opens the airway.

The type of drinking utensil that often causes coughing/aspiration are:

- Cups that have a lid with a spout.
- Sipper bottles or sports bottles.
- Cups/bottles that have integral straws.
- Straws.
- Cups or glasses that are tall and narrow.

If someone is coughing on fluids, and is using one of these utensils, **the first thing to try is a change of utensil.**

1. Ideally use a normal cup or glass with no lid/spout. If the person is unsteady and may spill the drink, they may need someone to steady it with them. Just take the weight of the cup and prevent spills. Wide cups or glasses are better than narrow ones.
2. Support the person to take small single sips and NOT to gulp several at once. Taking a breath in between each sip is very important and they may need help to achieve this.
3. Nosey cups are helpful as they stop the head tilting backwards. It is also easier to see into the cup to make sure small amounts are taken.
4. Spoons are sometimes the best utensil for a drink to be taken as they limit the amount that can be taken in one mouthful and slow down the speed of drinking.
5. DrinkRite cups or beakers limit the flow for 5cc or 10cc at a time. They are good to support independence for people who need to have small mouthfuls and therefore free up staff time.
6. Reminder cups can be programmed with a recorded message, giving the person a verbal prompt to take a drink.



Nosey/Dysphagia cups have a slanted or cut-away side to prevent head tilt.



DrinkRite cups can be ordered from orders.uk@atosmedical.com Order No: OSF5A5301

Straws

As a general rule, we do not recommend the use of straws **if someone has a swallowing problem**. However, for people that do find them helpful, but have a weak sucking movement, valved straws can be very useful.

Pat Saunders Straws can be purchased online and are able to be cleaned and re-used by the same person.

