

Utensils for Eating

The type of utensils used for eating can make a big difference to the safety of a meal and how much food can be managed.

Consider whether a change of utensil will be helpful and try this out to see if it does actually help.

Cutlery

Wherever possible, use normal knives, forks and spoons.

If a person is able to be independent with adapted cutlery though, this is better than doing it for them with normal cutlery.

Using a small spoon or fork can limit the amount of food put into the mouth, and this can really help some people who take large mouthfuls and cannot manage that much food in their mouth.

You can get foam tubes to put around the handles to make them easier to hold.

You can get adapted cutlery from disability shops and online. An OT assessment may be required for specialist equipment.

Check the person can cut the food adequately, they may just need support to do this.

Some examples are:

“Gyenno” spoon helps for tremor – others are available also

Sporks – combination of fork and spoon for one-handed eating

Angled cutlery



Plates/crockery

- Plateguards / High- sided bowls give the person something to push the food against if they cannot manage to do this with cutlery



- Warming plates help keep food hot for people who eat slowly. You fill a cavity inside the plate with boiling water to keep food warm.
- Small serving dishes can make food look more appetising, especially if it is pureed or minced (IDDSI levels 4/5).
- Coloured crockery can make it easier to identify a plate of food if someone has visual difficulties or dementia. Ensure contrast with background items eg. Tablecloth or mat.

An Occupational Therapy assessment may be able to assist with recommendations for specific problems