

Difficulty with Eating

<p>Identify the Problem</p>	<p>PROBLEM: Difficulty with Eating (including chewing, swallowing, dental concerns)</p> <p>GOAL/EXPECTED OUTCOME: To reduce difficulty with eating</p>
<p>Educate Yourself</p>	<p>ASSESS FURTHER:</p> <p>Understand the possible triggers of the problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person having a side effect of a medication that affects hunger? • Is the person experiencing any pain or illness? Is the person constipated? • Does the person have any mouth discomfort, such as painful gums, dentures not fitting right, etc.? • Is the person really tired at meal time? • Is the person's mouth dry? • Are there too many steps associated with eating? • Does the person have difficulty with chewing? • Does the person have trouble seeing his/her food? (The food might be the same color as the plate and blend in) • Is the person eating in a place he/she does not recognize? • Are there too many distractions or too much noise around the person? • Does the person not remember to stop and eat? <p>Understand the possible meaning of the problem to the person with Alzheimer's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person embarrassed to be fed by someone else? • Is the person frustrated or overwhelmed? <p>Understand the possible meaning of the problem to the caregiver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the caregiver frustrated? • Is the caregiver worried?
<p>Adapt</p> <p>Problem solve with interventions and actions</p>	<p>TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES TO CAREGIVER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make mealtimes simple, relaxed, and calm • Make sure the person is comfortable • Allow ample time for eating • Make sure the person's lips are not dry; use ChapStick as needed • If the person wears dentures, make sure they are properly in place • Preparing the eating area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure the plate is a different color from the food ○ Try to avoid patterns on placemats, plates and tablecloths. They can be distracting ○ Increase lighting in eating area ○ Reduce the noise and distractions around the person • Make eating simple. Try these options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve only one food at a time ○ Use bowls instead of plates

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Try setting the area with only utensils that are needed for the meal ○ Plastic utensils may be too light and might break. Try to avoid them ○ Use bendable straws or cups with lids ○ Serve finger foods that are easier for the person to pick up and eat ○ Sit in front of the person when helping with eating. Use simple, gentle words ● For over-eating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure the person is not sitting around with nothing to do. Try redirecting to activities that the person enjoys ○ Try 5 or 6 small meals a day ○ Have healthy snacks available, such as apples, carrots, etc. ● For under-eating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talk with the doctor about possible illness, pain, or medication affects ○ Check with the doctor about supplemental drinks, such as Ensure ○ Offer the person a glass of juice before the meal to increase appetite ○ Make sure the person is getting enough exercise ○ Try to make foods the person likes ○ Try feeding all of one food before moving to the next. Some people get confused by the change in texture or taste ○ Be flexible. Let the person eat when he/she is hungry if possible
	<p><u>CLINICAL SUPPORT:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a good dental check-up of the person’s gums, teeth and dentures ● Check with a doctor to see if problems with eating are a side effect of a medication or health problem ● Have vision or glasses checked ● Refer to PCP to evaluate for appropriate dietary needs. Request referral for swallowing evaluation (particularly important in later stages)
	<p><u>CAREGIVER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen empathically to caregiver and evaluate for level of distress ● Refer to IHSS ● Refer to MSSP ● Refer to Meals on Wheels ● Refer to Alzheimer’s Greater Los Angeles for support groups, disease education, and care consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ALZ Direct Connect referral ○ Provide 24/7 Helpline #: 844.HELP.ALZ 844.4357.259 ○ Website: www.alzpla.org ● Send literature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic Sheet – “Difficulty with Eating”

	<p><u>FOLLOW UP:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule a phone call with caregiver to discuss outcomes and provide additional support
	<p><u>NOTES:</u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>