

Screening for Dysphagia

Knowledge and skills:

- Staff carrying out screening have received training to Level 3 Of Eating, Drinking and Swallowing Competency Framework EDSCF(2020)

Timing/ standard

- Carried out within 4 hours of arrival at admitting hospital and before giving food/drink and oral medication and clearly documented
- Repeated as required

Tools

- Using a locally agreed valid and reliable screening protocol including: observation and graduated water swallow test

Signs of dysphagia

Comprehensive Swallowing and Clinical Nutritional Assessment

Knowledge and skills:

- SLT team trained to level 5 of Eating, drinking and swallowing competency framework (2020)
- Access to specialist SLT at level 6
- Access to dietetic support

Components:

- Clinical history : cognitive / communication/ capacity assessment; evaluation of oral mechanism; assessment of oral intake ; nutritional assessment; respiratory assessment
- Specialist referrals as required .e.g. GI; ENT, dentistry
- Use shared decision making taking account of preferences and realistic medicine

Tools

- Access to instrumental assessment e.g. Videofluoroscopy (VFSS); Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of swallowing (FEES); and adjuncts such as pulse oximetry; cough reflex testing

Diagnosis of post stroke dysphagia

Develop a person-centred swallowing care plan

Compensatory Interventions

- Bolus and texture modification: Provision of consistency modified diets using IDDSI terminology (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative)
- Bolus size, placement and positioning
- Postural adjustments / specialist utensils and cups
- Level 2 EDSCF trained staff to support mealtimes
- Information provision to patient and carers
- Dysphagia aware workforce e.g. STARS modules
- Suitable formulation of medication provided

Nutrition Interventions

- Specialist nutritional education
- Nutritional fortification and supplementation
- Alternative feeding – NG; RIG; PEG
- Mixed feeding methods monitoring

Restorative Interventions

- Access to rehabilitation programme with appropriate intensity for those who can benefit e.g.
 - Strength based exercises
 - Swallowing skills based exercises
- Interventions based on a detailed assessment of swallow physiology and cognition

Persisting / Chronic dysphagia

Follow –up and review: Mechanism in place to ensure access to review of those discharged with on-going dysphagia
Support for psychological adjustment