

## Purpose

The NDIS LWB 5523 Mealtime Support - Procedure will help LWB to achieve our goal of partnering with people and changing lives for the better. It is designed to allow staff to support a person's dignity, choices, and involvement in mealtime activities and assist people in ensuring a positive and enjoyable mealtime environment and quality mealtime support.

This procedure will be reflected in our practice in supporting children and young people within LWB Children Youth and Families foster care, residential care and aftercare services, and adults in Disability and Mental Health Services.

The NDIS LWB 5523 Mealtime Support - Procedure is to be applied in association with the [NDIS LWB 5516 My Meals My Way - Policy Guideline](#), [NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure](#) and the [NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Management - Procedure](#).

## What is Mealtime Support?

Mealtime Support brings all parts of LWB's My Meals My Way approach to the table. It links independence, social connections, and identity together to create the opportunity for everyone to engage in a safe and enjoyable mealtime experience.

## Our approach to safe and enjoyable mealtimes

Safety is important, and so is the quality of someone's life. Our role is to support not only safe but enjoyable mealtimes.

Helping a person express their unique likes and dislikes, traditions and customs, attitude toward mealtime and any mealtime support required is very important.

All LWB staff delivering mealtime supports will use person-centred active support to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the person and minimise risk.
- Provide choice and respect for a person's decisions and actions around food and mealtimes.
- Support identity, as who people are will impact how they experience mealtimes.
- Get to know the person and how they like to connect with others at mealtimes.
- Engage in meaningful mealtime roles. Involve the person in familiar or new meal-related activities to make them feel valued in an everyday routine.
- Create a welcoming, relaxed, and friendly dining environment that can lead to more mealtime enjoyment.
- Support mealtime events for special occasions, such as birthdays or cultural holidays.

## Working Together

Safe and enjoyable mealtimes are best supported by working together. Therefore, all Disability Support Leaders (DSL)<sup>1</sup> and Disability Support Workers (DSW) will work with the person, their family/friends, other service providers, and health professionals to ensure safe and positive mealtime activities and find solutions to any mealtime support challenges.

## Who should have a Mealtime Management Plan?

Any person:

- having difficulty safely eating or drinking,
- diagnosed with Dysphagia (swallowing difficulties),
- diagnosed with other health conditions that impact mealtimes,
- unable to obtain the required levels of nutrition as per the Australian Dietary Guidelines,
- requiring modifications to eat or drink, including
  - specialised/modified equipment and positioning,
  - a specialised diet,
  - texture-modified food and fluids,
- who needs any support to assist them in eating and drinking safely or nutritiously.

Any person we support who requires Enteral Nutrition must have a current [NDIS LWB 5623 Enteral Feeding Support - Plan](#). In addition, if the person can have some oral food and fluid intake, they will also require a Mealtime Management Plan detailing instructions on how the DSW can safely support oral intake.

Following the [NDIS LWB 5520 Nutrition and Swallowing Risk Checklist - Procedure](#) may identify these risk factors.

## Mealtime Management Plan Development

The Appropriately Qualified Health Professional (AQHP) who has assessed the person will document the person's mealtime support requirements within a Mealtime Management Plan. Staff can give AQHP a copy of the [NDIS LWB 5519 Mealtime Management Plan Essentials - Checklist](#) to help them understand what needs to be included in the plan.

The NDIS funds a range of disability-related health supports (including Dysphagia) through plan budgets. Funded supports include:

- the development and review of a Mealtime Management Plan by an AQHP or clinician, for example, a Speech Pathologist.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to a DSL includes other Frontline Leadership roles, such as House Supervisors.

- training for the DSW by a health practitioner or clinician in understanding the person's mealtime support requirements.
- consumables such as thickeners that enable a person to swallow more easily and reduce their risk of aspiration and choking.
- equipment to safely prepare modified textures such as blenders or food processors.
- food moulds to make food more visually appealing and stimulate enjoyable meals, thereby reducing the risk of malnutrition or dehydration.
- modified cutlery and cups to support safe oral intake and independence.

If a person requires mealtime support and does not have the necessary support funding for these items the DSL will work with the person, their decision-making support network, and Support Coordinator to assist with an NDIS Plan Variation or Reassessment.

**The Disability Support Leader will:**

- Work with the person, their decision-making support network or authorised decision-maker to seek their consent to participate, assist them in finding and choosing an AQHP and share any information with the Support Coordinator.
- Ensure the person is supported to participate in the Mealtime Management Plan development and understands the plan.
- Provide an opportunity for the person to complete the [NDIS LWB 5526 My Meals My Way - Profile](#) which can be shared with the AQHP developing the Mealtime Management Plan to make sure their likes, dislikes and any other mealtime requests and requirements are considered.
- Work with all AQHPs involved in developing a Mealtime Management Plan, for example, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Dietitians, and Dentists, so that information is in one single resource where possible.
- Support the person to express their choice and provide a copy of the plan or information in a communication style suited to them.
- Record any discussions with the person about choice, control and consent as a Progress Note on their CIRTS file. Include a description of the person's facial expressions, body language, words and vocalisations regarding choice and consent.
- Work with the AQHP to ensure an understanding of the resource and rostering requirements needed for Mealtime Support requirements.
- Work with the AQHP to obtain documented evidence for specific funded supports, that will support an NDIS Plan development or review process as required.
- Escalate to the Practice Support Lead within the Centre for Practice Excellence (CPE) any issues related to working with AQHPs around the required essentials included in the plan.

**Mealtime Management Plan Training:**

All DSWs will be trained as per the person's needs and their Mealtime Management Plan, as outlined in [NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure](#).

The [NDIS LWB 5450 Support Plan – Staff Declaration](#) must be signed after the training has been completed.

Training should occur with the person present wherever possible and at a suitable time.

When supporting people with a Severe Dysphagia or Enteral feeding (Tube feeding) plan, the DSL will follow [NDIS LWB 5600 High-Intensity Daily Personal Support – Procedure](#) and the [NDIS LWB 5685 HIDPA Severe Dysphagia Management - Procedure](#).

## Providing Mealtime Support

All people requiring a Mealtime Management Plan should be provided with information about their plan in a format that fits their communication style to help them understand how DSWs will support them with mealtime support to keep them safe.

**When providing mealtime support to a person, the Disability Support Worker will:**

- Follow the 7 Rights of Mealtime Support.
  1. Right Person and Plan
  2. Right support and response
  3. Right type of nutrition and hydration
  4. Right texture and consistency
  5. Right position
  6. Right aids and equipment
  7. Right documentation and record-keeping

*If one of the 7 Rights is incorrect, you will need to record a Nutrition and Swallowing event in i-Sight.*

**The Disability Support Worker will:**

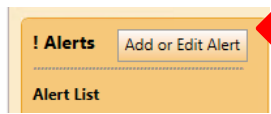
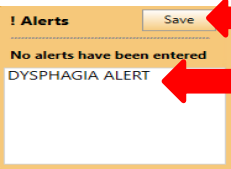
- Be trained in the specific mealtime support requirements for all persons they provide mealtime support for.
- Fill out the '[NDIS LWB 5450 Support Plan - Staff Declaration](#)'. This form is used to confirm that they have received training on how to support the person according to their plan.
- Have available to them all plans related to mealtime support and dietary requirements, for example, Diabetes Management Plan, an Anaplyaxis Action plan and Epi-Pen if a person has food-related allergies.
- Have any equipment and aids set up before serving the meal or drink.
- Always carefully follow the instructions in the person's mealtime management and dietary plans.
- Do not vary the plan, even at the person's request, as this can increase the risk of choking for the person.

- Record in a Progress Note and report to the Disability Support Leader any request by the person to vary the plan. The Disability Support Leader will raise the request with the person and seek advice from an AQHP.
- Make sure the person's My Meals My Way - Profile is used to create positive and enjoyable mealtimes.
- Maintain hygienic storage and food handling practices to avoid food contamination and ensure that meals of the right texture and consistency are delivered to the right person.
- Work to promote independence, balancing knowing when the person needs assistance and when they can do something independently.
- Talk to the person before the meal about how you will be helping them with their meal based on any mealtime management or dietary plans or their My Meals My Way - Profile, and check if they are ok for you to do so.
- Explain to the person that you will help them prepare and eat their meal and any drinks.
- Wash your hands to reduce any risk of cross-infection.
- Ask or assist the person to wash and dry their hands before the meal.
- Assist the person to sit upright at a table in the dining room or chair by their bed. This helps with swallowing and protects the airway. Remember, eating in a dining room makes the meal a social occasion.
- Support communication with the person while you are assisting them with their meal. Encourage their participation in the chat (based on their communication style) to help make the experience enjoyable and workable for you both.
- Ask if the person would like to protect their clothing with a serviette or protective clothing to help maintain their dignity.
- Sit down at the person's eye level. This aids effective communication and reassures the person that you will give them your time and attention to help them eat and drink.
- Tell the person what is on the plate. This is very important for the visually impaired or those eating a puree diet as the food may not be instantly recognisable.
- When you are feeding the person, ask them if they have a preferred order in which they wish to eat their food and when they would like a drink. Ask the person whether they would like any additional seasoning or sauces appropriate to their plan. This helps to make the experience enjoyable.
- Ask the person how they would like to receive their food. Some may prefer a fork, others a spoon. It is essential to let the person feel in control of the meal.
- Monitor eating and drinking activities and respond to risks and safety incidents during meals, such as coughing or choking on food or fluids.
- Do not be side-tracked by what is happening around you or talk with others. You must maintain the required level of support and supervision while the person is eating and drinking. Be aware that a minor gap in supervision can result in a choking event. For example, if there is a knock at the door, do not leave the person to answer the door.
- After the meal, ensure the person is comfortable and has had enough to eat and drink. The person should be encouraged to eat but should not be pressured when they have indicated that they have had enough.

- Support the person in washing their face and hands when they have completed their meal.
- Attend to the person’s oral care needs as per their Oral Health Care Plan.
- Wash your hands.
- Complete the appropriate documentation detailing dietary intake, mealtime support and activities. Complete a Progress Note in CIRTS. Complete the Food and Fluid Chart as required
- Where any new risk is identified, follow the [NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure](#)
- Between meals, be aware that those who need help with eating will need help with drinking too, and regular fluids should be offered.

**The Disability Support Leader will:**

- If a person declines to engage in mealtime support, or makes mealtime decisions that may put them at risk, the Disability Support Leader will escalate the matter to the Practice Support Lead within the Centre for Practice Excellence (CPE).
- Ensure a Dysphagia Alert is documented in section 4, and complete the Risk Management in section 5, of their [NDIS LWB 5001 Client Profile](#).
- Add a Dysphagia Alert in the “! Alerts” section on the person’s CIRTS file.

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|---|--|
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open the CIRTS file</li> <li>2. Go to ! Alerts section</li> <li>3. Click on Add or Edit Alert</li> </ol> |
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add text DYSPHAGIA ALERT.</li> <li>2. Click Save</li> </ol>  |

- Maintain correct rostering requirements for mealtime support needs.
- Undertake training requirements with an AQHP on the person’s Mealtime Management Plan.
- Ensure all DSWs are trained as required to deliver mealtime support.
- Coach and supervise DSWs to apply the 7 Rights of Mealtime Support.
- Engage the team in regular reflective conversations to ensure the quality of their practice.
- With consent, share and request any Mealtime Management, dietary plans or positive behaviour support plans related to eating and drinking with any other service providers and the health care team. This will ensure that Mealtime Management Plans are known and available to be followed consistently across all support environments and settings.

- Add a Progress Note in CIRTS to evidence that information and plans have been shared with other service providers or health care teams. In the subject line, include the name of the plan/name of the service provider/date.
- When any new risk is identified, follow the [NDIS LWB 5517 My Meals My Way - Procedure](#). Support the person to seek regular reviews (at least annually) or as required by their AQHP.

## Save the Mealtime Management Plan in CIRTS

Save any Mealtime Management Plan or reviews, created by an AQHP for the person we support, in CIRTS as follows:

Plans & Assessments > Plans - < Mealtime Management Plan > SURNAME, First Name.  
YYYY.MM.DD.

## Monitoring & Supervision

The DSL will put into action a planned approach to managing risks for any person identified with a swallowing or choking risk. This will include:

- Ensuring all DSWs have completed all mandatory training, including HIDPA assessment for a person requiring management of severe dysphagia.
- Recording DSW training activities to evidence completion of training, including against any specific Mealtime Management Plan, and the AQHP signs off any HIDPA Skills assessment.
- A rapid and detailed response to manage risks, incidents, and emergencies, including escalation of an incident to the Regional Operations Manager (ROM), Centre for Practice Excellence (CPE) and AQHP.
- Escalate any issues experienced by the service team regarding putting My Meals My Way or Mealtime Support into everyday practice to the Practice Support Lead within the Centre for Practice Excellence (CPE) to enable further support for the team.
- Documenting the supervision approach that strengthens the support worker's ability to identify and respond appropriately to the person's needs, risks and emergencies related to eating and drinking activities.

## Review Requirements

All Health Care Plans must be developed by a Health Professional who understands the person's needs. To ensure plans remain relevant, each Health Care Plan must be reviewed at least annually or more often if the needs of the person change.

LWB Disability Support Staff must also monitor the person's health in the context of the STOP AND WATCH principles outlined in the [NDIS LWB 5501 Health and Wellbeing - Procedure](#).

Health Care Plans (including Mealtime Management and any dietary plans) can only be reviewed six (6) times before a new plan **must** be developed. In addition, Health Care Plans can only be reviewed by the Health Professional who developed the plan or another professional with equivalent qualifications.

If the treating Health Professional has changed since the plan was originally developed, the new AQHP may choose to develop their own plan for the person.

## Further Advice

For further advice about supporting the person with their plan, please contact the author of the person's Mealtime Management Plan in the first instance or arrange for the person and their plan to be reviewed by an AQHP. Further information about IDDSI, NDISQ Practice Alerts and related resources can be accessed via the Disability Pathway [My Meals My Way](#) page.



