

At diagnosis and during regular MDT assessment, or if there are concerns about weight nutrition swallowing

Assess



Weight

- Weight and BMI history and at diagnosis
- Current weight and BMI

Nutritional intake, Fluid intake, Hydration, Oral Health

- Fluid and food intake versus nutritional and hydration needs
- Nutritional supplements, if needed
- Appetite and thirst
- Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or constipation
- Causes of reduced oral intake e.g swallowing difficulties, limb weakness, low mood or depression causing reduced appetite

Ability to eat and drink

- Need for aids and altered utensils
- Help with food and drink preparation
- Advice and aids for positioning, posture and seating
- Eating in social situations

Swallowing

- Positioning
- Seating
- Food/drink consistency
- Help with food and drink preparation
- Respiratory symptoms and risk of aspiration
- Fear of choking and psychological considerations eg wanting to eat without assistance
- Eating in social situations

Possible Solutions

- ✓ Food consistency (IDDSI - International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative)
- ✓ Adapted cutlery and/or utensils
- ✓ Food supplements
- ✓ Positioning and posture
- ✓ Eating and drinking aids
- ✓ Seating
- ✓ Help with food preparation
- ✓ Psychological considerations
- ✓ **Gastrostomy**

Gastrostomy - Time critical rather than a last resort

Discuss this possibility at early stage and at regular intervals if person is open to do so.

Do not discount this option too early: the idea may not appeal at first but with clear information and time it may become welcome. A few, however, will never accept it.

Gastrostomy can be used for:

- medication,
- supplement drinks,
- water.

Explain that to decrease risk:

- Fit before respiratory levels are too limited
- Fit before weight is too low

Discuss pros and cons:

- Eating for pleasure. Eating is not just calories and nutrition – it is a social activity which gives pleasure
- By meeting nutrition needs through a feeding tube it may be possible to maintain some social eating if safe to do so as the person is not reliant on oral feeding for all their dietary needs