

# EATING FOR CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

DECREASED MUSCLE CONTROL



FROM THE BRAIN



HEALTHY GROWTH



MORE ENERGY



BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

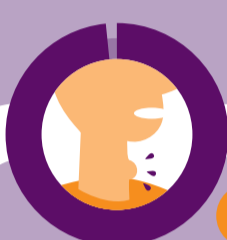


STRONG MUSCLES & BONES

Optimal nutrition is important for general health and development of children. Mealtimes skills may be difficult for some children with cerebral palsy. They might have difficulty chewing effectively or swallowing safely. On this poster we identify common problems and provide some tips for mealtimes.



## COMMON CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY



HAVE DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING

UP TO 99%



EXPERIENCE CONSTIPATION

UP TO 74%



HAVE REFLUX

UP TO 32%



HAVE LONG MEALTIMES

UP TO 28%



HAVE DIFFICULTY CHEWING

UP TO 69%



EXPERIENCE DROOLING

UP TO 58%



EXPERIENCE STRESS DURING MEALTIMES

UP TO 20%

THIS CAN LEAD TO CHILDREN BEING UNDERWEIGHT



## SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY OF EATING AND DRINKING

The Eating and Drinking Ability Classification System (EDACS) describes five distinct levels of ability using the key features of safety and efficiency.



I

Eats and drinks safely and efficiently

II

Eats and drinks safely but with some limitations to efficiency

III

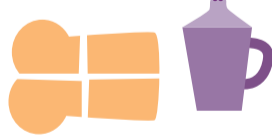
Eats and drinks with some limitations to safety; this can also limit efficiency

IV

Eats and drinks with significant limitations to safety

V

Unable to eat or drink safely – tube feeding may be considered to provide nutrition



## TIPS FROM PARENTS TO PARENTS

Use a **CHEWING BAG\*** for taste when eating is not safe

**ENCOURAGE** your child to take small bites and chew carefully

Consult a dietician if **SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING** is required

Pay attention to the child's **POSTURE** in their chair: consult an occupational therapist for advice if you're unsure

Consult a **SPEECH PATHOLOGIST** or **DOCTOR** if your child experiences difficulties with chewing or swallowing

Try to make eating **FUN**

Involve your child in **PREPARING** the meal



Not all tips are applicable to all children. If you have questions please consult with a health care professional.

\*Chewing bags aren't used in all countries

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you need specific advice, please contact a health care professional. For more information and to download this poster go to: [cerebralpalsy.org.au](http://cerebralpalsy.org.au)