

Procedure: Mealtime Management

When assisting participants during mealtime, Individualised Community Access Services (ICAS) is committed to providing each participant with meals that meet their individual needs and preferences. This means ICAS will always provide meals that are:

- Nutritious and enjoyable;
- Of appropriate texture for each participant;
- Based on each participants specific mealtime management;
- Prepared in a safe, hygienic and timely manner.

Assessing Mealtime Management Needs

As part of the intake process, ICAS will identify each participant that requires mealtime management. This will require participants specific needs having been assessed by an appropriately qualified health practitioner prior to ICAS providing any assistance or support to participants around meals. The assessment will form part of the process for creating a mealtime management plan that reflects the preferences and needs of the participant.

Key areas that need to be assessed include:

- Swallowing and nutritional needs;
- Seating and positioning needs;
- Environmental needs;
- Appropriate meal timing and frequency;
- Any medication the participant is taking and how/if this will impact their diet;
- Any allergies the participant has and how this will impact their diet; and
- General and oral health needs.

Mealtime Management Plans

Each participant requiring mealtime management must have a mealtime management plan. When undertaking mealtime management ICAS will ensure that:

- We work with health practitioners to obtain appropriate mealtime management plans, including:
 - Doctors;
 - Speech Pathologists;
 - Dieticians;
 - Pharmacists;
 - Occupational Therapists; and/or
 - Physiotherapists.
- Workers and key management personnel understand and adhere to the participants specific plan at all times;
- The mealtime management plans include:
 - Each participants specific mealtime needs, including swallowing, eating and drinking;
 - Risk assessments relating to meal planning, preparation and consumption;
 - Steps that must be taken if safety incidents occur, such as coughing or choking on food or fluids; and
 - The contact information of people involved in providing mealtime management, including qualified health practitioners.
- Each participant requiring mealtime management is involved in assessing their needs and creating their mealtime management plan;

- Each participant's consent is obtained prior to involving them in the process of assessing their needs and creating their plan;
- All relevant workers understand how to manage incidents related to mealtime management, including coughing or choking on food or fluids;
- All assessments and plans are reviewed annually or:
 - As often as recommended by the participants qualified health practitioner; and/or
 - More frequently if the participants needs change or any difficulties are observed.
- Each participant that requires mealtime management can access their plan; and
- Each worker undertaking mealtime management can access the plan of every participant they are supporting.

Worker Training

ICAS will ensure that each worker undertaking mealtime management has the appropriate training to do so in a safe and effective manner.

Training around mealtime management will cover:

- The specific needs and preferences of participants workers will be supporting;
- The specific skills needed to carry out every aspect of each participants plan;
- The preparation and provision of enjoyable and safe meals including:
 - Timely meal planning and preparation;
 - How to maintain a safe food consumption and preparation environment; and
 - Modifying foods (e.g., food texture) in accordance with each participants mealtime management plan.
- The identification, management and mitigation of emerging and chronic health risks;
- Signs of common food-related complications, such as choking;
- Identifying all other people involved in managing chronic and emerging health risks (e.g., key management personnel, the participants qualified health practitioner);
- When and how to seek help from other people involved in managing chronic and emerging health risks (e.g., key management personnel, the participants qualified health practitioners);
- The steps the worker will need to take if safety incidents occur during meals, such as coughing or choking on food or fluids; and
- Storage arrangements for relevant records relating to mealtime management and how these records can be accessed.

Developing Menus

ICAS will work with the participant to develop menus that meet the participants needs and preferences. This will include their cultural and religious preferences. ICAS is committed to assisting each participant with making informed choices about their meals by:

- Giving the participant a variety of options and explaining these options (with the use of relevant communication aids, if required);
- Encouraging the participant to suggest meals and beverages they would like to consume;
- Allowing the participant sufficient time to consider their options;
- Giving the participant the opportunity to ask questions about their options; and
- Giving the participant the opportunity to consult their family, representatives or any other members of their support network about their options.

When developing menus, the following will always be considered:

- The participants preferences (including cultural and religious preferences);
- Food/drink recommendations made by an appropriately qualified health practitioner;
- The contents of the participants mealtime management plan; and
- Any chronic or emerging health risks that will have an impact on the participants diet such as:
 - Swallowing difficulties;
 - Anaphylaxis and other food allergies;
 - Obesity; and
 - Being underweight.

Food Texture

All workers are required to prepare meals that are accurate to the participants management plan. Each meal must be of appropriate texture, and texture-modified if required. To ensure this, workers must:

- Consult the participants mealtime management plan;
- Consult the menu developed for the participant;
- Explain the menu to the participant; and
- Prepare the food in accordance with the participants mealtime management plan.

Once food has been prepared, workers must check that the food is of correct texture. To do this, workers must:

- Check to ensure the food has been prepared in accordance with the participants plan and menu;
- Support the participant to have their meal in an environment and manner that meets their needs;
- Monitor the participant for any signs that the food is not of a suitable texture such as:
 - Difficulty chewing and/or swallowing;
 - Coughing; and
 - Gagging.
- If the above signs are present, stop food consumption immediately;
- If an incident has occurred, manage the situation in accordance with ICAS Incident Management policies and procedures; and
- Prepare an alternative meal that is more suitable for the participant.

Managing Safety Incidents

ICAS will ensure that our participants can consume meals in a safe manner. This will be accomplished by:

- Undertaking risk assessments for each participant that requires mealtime management;
- Adjusting our risk management data in response to changing participant needs;
- Training all relevant workers to respond to different types of risks and incidents, including how to respond to emergency situations; and
- Managing any incidents in accordance with our incident management policies and procedures.

Complaints About Mealtime Management

Any complaints around any aspect of mealtime management will be addressed in accordance with our Complaints Management Policy.

Cooking Food

When cooking workers are required to:

- Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 62.8 °C before removing meat from the heat source.
- For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.
- Cook all raw ground beef, pork, lamb, and veal to an internal temperature of 71.1 °C.
- Cook all poultry to an internal temperature 73.9 °C.

Food Safety and Storage

ICAS will ensure that all its food is prepared in a safe and hygienic environment. This is important for maintaining food quality and avoiding food poisoning. ICAS will maintain food safety by:

- Ensuring all food preparation areas are kept clean and tidy;
- Cleaning all surfaces used in food preparation with a food safe surface cleaner and ensure all tea towels and cloths are placed in the laundry for washing;
- Providing appropriate cooking utensils and implements;
- Providing appropriate storage facilities (e.g., fridges, freezers, pantry cupboards);
- Ensuring that all food is stored and prepared in accordance with all relevant health standards; and
- Undertaking regular kitchen inspections.

When preparing food, workers must:

- Always wash their hands thoroughly before handling food;
- Wear gloves at all times when handling a participants food;
- Comply with ICAS Infection Control Policy;
- Ensure that each item is stored in the appropriate place, including:
 - Perishables such as meat, dairy and vegetables are refrigerated below 5°C
 - Dry staples, such as flour, rice and pasta are stored in a cool, dark and dry pantry cupboard; and
 - Frozen foods are put into the freezer and stored at -15°C or cooler.
- Perishable food should not be left out of the refrigerator more than two (2) hours at room temperature or one (1) hour when the temperature is above 32.2°C. If food is left out longer than the times specified above, then the food must be thrown out.
- Ensure that all food and drinks can be easily identified as meals to be provided to specific participants (e.g.) by labelling);
- Ensure that food and drinks to be provided to different participants are sufficiently differentiated from each other;
- Follow the food preparation instructions provided by ICAS and/or the directions on the packet;
- Wash up after cooking with hot water and detergent to remove grease and food residue or place items in the dishwasher;
- Avoid cross-contamination by:
 - Washing hands after touching raw food;
 - Covering raw food, including meat, and storing it separately from ready-to-eat food; and
 - Using different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food.

- Where there are leftovers, ensure they are properly packaged in airtight packages or sealed in storage containers before being placed in the refrigerator.
- Record date of preparing on label and affix to food container.
- Leftovers can only be kept for a maximum of four (4) days before being disposed of.
- Leftovers must be reheated to at least 75°C before eating and ensure that leftovers are only kept for a maximum of four (4) days.
- Apply the 'If in doubt, throw it out' rule to minimise the risk of a food borne illness to a participant.