

HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE WITH SELF-FEEDING



MEALTIME SUPPLIES

Adaptive feeding devices are valuable tools that can assist individuals with their feeding independence. These devices are often sold at stores like Walmart, CVS, and Amazon.

Non-Slip Placemat:

Place a non-skid placemat under dishes to prevent slips and spills.

Built-Up Utensils:

Utensils with thicker handles help with poor grip strength and poor finger control. You can buy utensils with built-up handles. You can also purchase foam tubing to put around normal utensils to make them easier to use.

Cups with Handles & Lids:

Cups with handles allow individuals to hold cups with less difficulty. Lids can prevent spills.

Plate Guards:

Plate guards can be clipped on to plates to allow for easier scooping and to prevent spills. Plates with built-up edges are also a good idea.

Weighted Utensils:

Utensils with added weight help stabilize the hand during self-feeding. The additional weight is useful for adults with tremors or shaky hands.

Universal Cuffs:

Universal cuffs strap around the hand and hold the utensils in them. These allow individuals with poor grip strength or hand control to hold a variety of utensils.

Contrast:

Try to provide high-contrast placemats and dishes to help with decreased attention and vision. For example, use a black placemat with white plates/bowls or a white placemat with dark colored plates/bowls.

PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE

A decline in one's ability to self-feed does not always require total assistance from a caregiver. Try helping your loved one with feeding as it is important that they continue participating with feeding when possible. Remember to be patient as your loved one may require more time to eat than they used to. Below are a few techniques for assisting a loved one with feeding:

In the example below, the caregiver has painted nails.



Hand-Under-Hand Assist:

Hold the utensil in your own hand. Place your loved one's hand over your hand. Bring the food to/from your loved one's mouth while they are holding on to your hand.



Hand-Over-Hand Assist:

Allow your loved one to hold the utensil. Place your hand on top of their hand. Gently guide the utensil to/from your loved one's mouth.



Direct Hand Feeding:

Hold the utensil in your hand and bring the food to/from your loved one's mouth. Remember to take your time and make sure your loved one is ready for each bite. This technique should be the last resort as it limits independence.

For a video of the above techniques, please visit: <https://melissabphd.com/nosh>

