

# Health Literacy for Meals on Wheels

Condition	Definition	Possible Actions
<b>Acquired Brain Injury</b>	A non-traumatic brain injury caused by external factors such as a stroke, brain tumour or lack of oxygen.	Ask the client/representative if the client has any lasting impacts from the brain injury that will affect meal delivery and document appropriate instructions for kitchen/deliverers.
<b>Allergy</b>	A harmful reaction to something that is harmless to most people.	When onboarding, always ask if the client has a food allergy. If so, ensure that the client's meal is prepared separately to avoid contamination and note any allergens in the client file, meal labels and run sheets.
<b>Alzheimer's Disease</b>	A type of dementia that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative.  Note on run sheet that client may have poor memory.  Ask client or representative if they need volunteers to take any specific actions when delivering meals (e.g., remind client to eat hot meal straight away).
<b>Anxiety</b>	An emotion characterised by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns and may avoid certain situations out of worry.	Add note to run sheet that client sometimes experiences anxiety so that volunteers are aware.
<b>Arthritis</b>	Painful inflammation and stiffness of the joints.	Ask the client if their arthritis affects their hands/fingers and ability to open packaging or cut meals up. Note on run sheet if volunteers need to assist with open or loosen the packaging of meal. Add to kitchen notes if meal needs to be cut up.
<b>Aspiration</b>	When food or liquid goes down the wrong way into the lungs.	Ask the client if they require texture modified meals (refer to IDDSI Standards) or ask if they have been referred to a Speech Pathologist for assessment. Gain the Speech

		Pathologists contact details so you can confirm how the meal will need to be modified.
<b>Ataxia</b>	A group of disorders that affect coordination, balance and speech.	Ask the client/representative how ataxia affects them. Depending on extent of symptoms, client may be slow to the door, difficult to understand when speaking or have difficulty using cutlery. Add notes to run sheet or client file accordingly.
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder</b>	A lifelong developmental condition characterised by difficulties in social interaction, communication, restricted and repetitive interests and behaviours, and sensory sensitivities.	Add note on file and run sheet to make staff and volunteers aware.
<b>Cancer</b>	When abnormal cells grow uncontrollably beyond their usual boundaries to invade other areas or organs.	<p>Different types of cancer and cancer treatment can affect dietary requirements and day-to-day living.</p> <p>Loss of appetite and/or taste can be experienced.</p> <p>Ask the client if they have any dietary requirements or specific delivery instructions and note on file/run sheet.</p> <p>Let the client know how you can adjust meals/delivery according to what they require if needs change.</p>
<b>Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)</b>	Conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain or stroke.	May require dietary management to prevent worsening of CVD. Ask the client if they have any dietary requirements (e.g., low salt or low fat).
<b>Cerebral Palsy</b>	A group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. Body movement and muscle coordination are affected permanently.	Ask the client if they have any specific delivery instructions (e.g., bring meal to them and open packaging). Add necessary instructions for volunteers to the run sheet.
<b>Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)</b>	A group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems.	Ask the client if they have any specific delivery instructions (e.g., do they have difficulty getting to the door due to shortness of breath?).
<b>Cystic Fibrosis (CF)</b>	A chronic lung disease that causes thick mucus to build up in the lungs, digestive tract and other areas of the body.	Ask the client what dietary requirements they have. They may need high energy meals to maintain normal weight.

<b>Dentition</b>	The development of teeth and their arrangement, characteristic, kind and number.	If client is missing teeth or has poor dentition, ask if they require a texture modified diet (refer to IDDSI standards).
<b>Dementia</b>	A chronic disorder of the mental processes marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning.	<p>Check MAC support plan to identify primary contact person/representative.</p> <p>Ask if there are any specific delivery or dietary instructions (e.g., put meal in front of client and remind them to eat immediately).</p> <p>Add note to run sheet so that volunteers are aware.</p>
<b>Degenerative Disease</b>	A sickness that gets worse over time.	The welfare check is important for identifying changes in condition. Check in with client more frequently to ensure services are meeting needs.
<b>Diabetes</b>	A chronic metabolic disease that causes abnormal metabolism of carbohydrates and elevated levels of blood sugar. Over time this can affect other organs if not managed well.	Diabetes is managed differently depending on the individual. If your service offers diabetic meals, ask the client if they would like these modified meals.
<b>Diverticulitis</b>	Inflammation of small pouches that form on the inside of the intestine. It can cause muscle spasms and cramps in the abdomen.	Dietary management for diverticulitis is individualised and changes when pouches are inflamed. Ask the client if they have any dietary restrictions.
<b>Dysarthria</b>	Weak mouth or face muscles which makes it hard to speak clearly.	<p>Ask the client what their preferred communication method is (e.g., written).</p> <p>Make note on run sheet so that volunteers know the client has difficulty speaking clearly.</p>
<b>Dysgraphia</b>	A condition that makes it hard to write.	Ask the client what their preferred communication method is (e.g., verbal). Use preferred communication method for filling in forms, feedback surveys, menus, etc.
<b>Dyslexia</b>	A condition that makes it hard to read and write.	Ask the client what their preferred communication method is (e.g., verbal). Use preferred communication method for filling in forms, feedback surveys, menus, etc.
<b>Dysphagia</b>	Difficulty swallowing.	Ask the client if they require a texture modified diet and what level of texture modification is required (refer to IDDSI standards).

<b>Fatigue</b>	Extreme tiredness from mental or physical exertion or illness.	Ask the client whether fatigue affects mealtime in any way. For example, they may prefer meals cut up for them.
<b>FODMAP Diet</b>	When a person's digestive system responds poorly after eating certain carbohydrates, they may go on a FODMAP diet. The FODMAP diet is complex and has multiple stages of strict food restriction and testing.	Ask the client for a list of foods that they can and cannot eat. Work with the client to support their dietary needs as best as possible.
<b>Food Texture Modification</b>	When food is mashed/pureed or modified in some way to make it safer to eat.	Ask the client what level of texture modification they require and ensure food is modified to a safe texture in accordance with IDDSI standards.
<b>Functional Neurological Disorder (FND)</b>	Group of conditions that makes it hard to control movement due to brain function abnormality.	Ask the client if they have any meal delivery instructions or whether they need the meal modified in any way for ease of consumption (e.g., texture modification).
<b>Gastro-oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD)</b>	Stomach acid rising into the food pipe causing heartburn or regurgitation.	GORD can cause difficulty swallowing and it can be triggered by certain foods. Talk with the client about what foods trigger symptoms for them and add these to their dietary restrictions.
<b>Gout</b>	A form of inflammatory arthritis that usually causes pain in one joint at a time.	Talk with the client about what foods trigger symptoms for them and add these to their restrictions.
<b>Huntington's Disease</b>	A progressive condition causing involuntary movements and difficulty with speech, swallowing, posture and balance.	<p>Ask the client if the symptoms they have from the condition will affect service delivery in any way. For example, do they require texture modified meals due to difficulty swallowing or written communication due to difficulty with speech?</p> <p>Check in with the client more frequently to ensure service continues to meet needs.</p> <p>Make notes on run sheet of anything volunteers need to be aware of.</p>
<b>Hypertension</b>	High blood pressure.	Ask the client if they have any symptoms from hypertension (often people don't experience any symptoms) and whether they have any dietary requirements. They may request low salt and/or low-fat meals to help manage hypertension.
<b>Intolerance (in relation to food)</b>	Inability to digest a particular food properly, or when food irritates the digestive system.	Ensure any food intolerance is noted as a dietary restriction.

<b>Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)</b>	A group of symptoms such as pain or discomfort in the abdomen and changes in bowel movements.	IBS can be caused by an intolerance to certain foods. Ask the client if they have any dietary restrictions.
<b>Kidney Disease</b>	Damage to the kidneys where they cannot filter blood the way they should.	Ask the client if they have any dietary restrictions to help manage the condition. Some clients with kidney disease may need to limit fluids, eat low protein foods or limit salt and potassium.
<b>Laryngectomy</b>	Removal of part or all of the voice box.	Ask the client what their preferred method of communication is. Add note to run sheet if volunteers need to be aware.
<b>Laryngopharyngeal Reflux</b>	Stomach acid travels back up to the throat.	Ask the client if they have any dietary restrictions as some foods may trigger laryngopharyngeal reflux for them.
<b>Lupus</b>	An inflammatory disease caused by the immune system attacking its own tissues. Inflammation can affect a number of different body systems.	Symptoms of lupus can be managed through dietary modifications. Ask the client if they have any dietary restrictions to help them manage the condition (e.g., minimise processed foods, low sodium, saturated fat and/or added sugars).
<b>Malnutrition</b>	Deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in intake of energy or nutrients.	Ask the client if they have any dietary requirements. A health professional may suggest a high protein, high energy diet if it's protein and energy malnutrition.
<b>Mild Cognitive Impairment</b>	Early stage of memory loss or other cognitive ability loss where other activities of daily living are maintained.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative.  Ask if there are any specific delivery or dietary instructions.  Add relevant notes to run sheet so that volunteers are aware (e.g., occasional memory loss – tell client you are from Meals on Wheels).
<b>Mixed Aphasia</b>	Difficulty understanding, talking, reading and writing due to damage to the brain.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative or has a preferred communication method.
<b>Motor Neurone Disease (MND)</b>	A group of diseases that causes muscle weakness and speech and swallowing difficulties.	Ask the client if they require texture modified meals (refer to IDDSI standards). Also ask if they have a preferred communication method or any specific delivery

		instructions. For example, if they will be slow to the door, note this on the run sheet.
<b>Motor Speech Disorder</b>	Trouble speaking due to weak muscles in the mouth and face.	Ask the client what their preferred communication method is (i.e., written).
<b>Multiple Sclerosis</b>	A potentially disabling disease of the brain and spinal cord.	Ask the client if they have any mobility limitations that may cause difficulty at delivery or when eating meals. Depending on level of impact, the client may need meals cut up or packaging opened for them.
<b>Neurodegenerative Diseases</b>	When nerve or brain cells die progressively.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative.  Do more frequent reviews with client to ensure needs are being met.
<b>Non-Verbal</b>	Cannot use words to communicate.	Check MAC support plan to see if it indicates a preferred communication method. It may be written or through a representative.
<b>Odynophagia</b>	Pain in the mouth or throat when swallowing.	Ask the client what foods cause pain and whether a different food texture helps.
<b>Osteoporosis</b>	A bone disease characterised by a decrease in bone strength, increasing the risk of fractures.	Ask the client if they have any specific dietary requirements or mobility limitations that will affect delivery.
<b>Palliative Care</b>	Treatment, care and support for people living with a life-limiting illness that cannot be cured and they are likely to die from.	Ask the client if they have any dietary requirements or delivery instructions. Be aware that they may have low appetite and loss of taste.  Do whatever you can to support the client and provide a service that meets their needs and requests.
<b>Parkinson's Disease</b>	A progressive brain condition that makes it hard to move the body and muscles. Characterised by tremors, limb rigidity and gait and balance problems.	Ask the client if they have any instructions for delivery (e.g., take the meal inside to client and open it; slow to door). Ask the client if they require a texture modified meal (refer to IDDSI Standards).
<b>Progressive Neurological Disorder</b>	Conditions that have progressive deterioration in brain functioning with no cure.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative. Ask if

		<p>there are any specific delivery instructions and add relevant notes to run sheet.</p> <p>Do more frequent reviews with the client to assess whether needs have changed.</p>
<b>Self-Advocacy</b>	A person's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert their own interests, desires, needs and rights.	No action required.
<b>Swallowing Distress</b>	When you can see that swallowing is difficult or not safe (coughing, choking, etc.).	Ask the client if they would like texture modified meals (refer to IDDSI Standards) or to be referred to a Speech Pathologist to be assessed.
<b>Tracheostomy</b>	A tube in a hole at the front of the neck to help with breathing.	Ask the client what their preferred communication method is if they have trouble speaking. Add a note to the run sheet so that volunteers are aware of the tracheostomy before going to visit the client.
<b>Trauma</b>	A physical injury.	Ask the client if their injury affects mobility in any way that may impact meal delivery (e.g., getting to the door when volunteers knock, opening packaging or cutting meals up).
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	A head injury that leads to brain damage.	<p>Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative.</p> <p>Ask if there are any specific delivery instructions and add to run sheet.</p>
<b>Wernicke's Aphasia</b>	Damage to part of the brain resulting in impaired language comprehension.	Check MAC support plan to identify whether the client has nominated a primary contact person/representative or has a preferred communication method for ease of comprehension.