

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Children who Eat and Drink Too Fast or Overfill their Mouth

Children are at a higher risk of coughing or choking when they:

- Eat and drink too fast.
- Eat and drink when moving around.
- Put too much in, or 'overfill' their mouth.

Why?

Some children:

- May be easily distracted.
- Are more interested in playing than in eating.
- Only sit still for a short time.
- Have sensory differences. They are less aware of the food or drink in their mouth.

How to help

- Reduce distractions for example turn off the TV.
- Have clear routines for snack and mealtimes.
- Sit your child on a chair that supports their back.
- Build up the time your child is sitting gradually.
- Using a table and chair made for children can help.
- Keep meal and snack times fun.
- Let your child see you eating and drinking. Make sure you eat at a steady pace and take manageable mouthfuls.
- Start by giving small amounts of food on your child's plate. It should be enough to fill their mouth but not to make their mouth too full. Add more food to the plate when they have finished.
- For children with sensory differences, it can help to serve something chilled or with a strong flavour.



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With **all of us** in mind.