

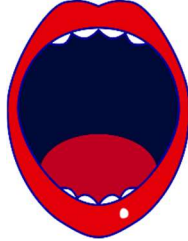


GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL TEAM

ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES TO ASSIST IN THE REDUCTION OF ORAL SENSITIVITY



A child who is overresponsive to information from the oral systems can be very sensitive to the taste and textures of food. They can be fussy eaters, choosing foods that they perceive as safe. This can limit their exploration of new foods and acceptance of any foods that are unfamiliar to them. The following are a list of activities and strategies that can be used to assist in processing and modulating information from the oral system.

It helps to be aware of the child's sensitivity to different textures when preparing or offering them food. These should be accommodated for whenever possible whilst ensuring that they eat a varied and balanced diet.

- ✚ Be aware that while the child may enjoy different food items, they may not like them placed together on a plate, i.e. they may enjoy beans and chips but may find it difficult if they are placed together on a plate so that the beans make the chips soggy etc. Providing food on different plates or on plates with separate sections can help overcome this problem.
- ✚ Whenever possible try to encourage the child to try out different foods, this should be done gradually and alongside familiar safe foods and withdrawn if they become upset.
- ✚ Making note of all new textures and food tried and accepted and include them in meals
- ✚ Build up tolerance to oral sensation by providing opportunities to practice the following chewing on textured food i.e. breadsticks, toast. (If you suspect your child has swallowing difficulties or is at risk of choking, please refrain from giving your child these foods and seek advice from your child's Doctor or Paediatrician).
- ✚ Drinking from water bottles
- ✚ Sucking through a drinking straw or curly straw, particularly thicker drinks like smoothies or milkshakes
- ✚ Blowing bubbles, playing blow football, using blow pens
- ✚ Using an electric toothbrush

N. NB: Your child should be supervised when carrying out any aspects of the above.

If you suspect your child has swallowing difficulties or is at risk of choking, please seek advice from your child's Doctor or Paediatrician.