# Mealtime Checklist

**reach**
BY NIGHTINGALE HAMMERSON
OUR EXPERTISE FOR YOU TO CARE AT HOME

## BEFORE THE MEAL

- [ ] Signal mealtime with cues like smells, clocks, and table setting (you can do this together)
- [ ] Offer clear meal choices, e.g. "Apple or orange juice?"
- [ ] Reduce distractions, by turning off the TV and minimizing noise
- [ ] Create a calm atmosphere e.g. soft music
- [ ] Prepare food and drinks to the right texture and temperature
- [ ] Ensure the table and chair are at a comfortable height
- [ ] Check hearing aids and glasses are in use if needed
- [ ] Ensure the dining area is well-lit with food in view
- [ ] Ask if they need the toilet
- [ ] Wash hands, especially before offering finger foods
- [ ] Prepare medications for before or after the meal

## DURING THE MEAL

- [ ] Upright positioning, if in a chair feet should be flat on the floor
- [ ] Check-in to see whether they are managing and enjoying the meal
- [ ] Talk about the food to encourage appetite
- [ ] Keep them in your eyeline to check for signs of difficulty

### IF YOU ARE ASSISTING...

- [ ] Stay in their eyeline, be comfortable, and within reach of the food
- [ ] Ensure they have swallowed before offering the next mouthful
- [ ] Use hand-over-hand support if needed
- [ ] Ensure they are fully awake; stop if they fall asleep

## AFTER THE MEAL

- [ ] Clear plates away to avoid confusion and signal end of mealtime
- [ ] Sit upright for at least 30 minutes
- [ ] Check mouth is empty and support with mouth cleaning if needed
- [ ] Note any signs of indigestion, coughing or discomfort
- [ ] Fill in your Mealtime Diary

## PERSONAL CHECK LIST

- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____

# Mealtime Diary

| DATE | TIME | WHAT DID THEY HAVE? | WHAT DID YOU NOTICE? | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.g. 10/06/24 | 12:30 | Roast chicken, mashed potatoes and vegetables. Gravy on the side.<br><br>Lemonade from the blue cup. | Aunt Shirley coughed on the chicken, better when gravy was added.<br><br>Watery eyes after drinking. | She loved the mashed potatoes, ate them all!<br><br>Didn't want dessert – says she had indigestion. |
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**IF SWALLOWING CONCERNS ARE PERSISTENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTACT A GP FOR FURTHER SUPPORT FROM A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST.**