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FEEDING/SWALLOWING REPORT

Name: Tamsin Colley

DOB: 10.9.02

Tamsin is a 3 5 yr old girl who has been receiving regular speech pathology intervention since June 2004. Tamsin had a posterior fossa pilocytic astrocytoma removed on 31.03.04. She has significant ataxia with a severe motor speech disorder.

She was referred for feeding/swallowing assessment by Bronwyn Carrigg due to reported concerns about coughing and choking behaviours when drinking. Tamsin attended a feeding/swallowing assessment today with her mother, Cathy.

Cathy reports that since Tamsin's surgery in 2004, she has coughed intermittently when drinking thin fluids. Her ability to manage thin fluids appears to be related to the speed at which she is drinking, the utensil she is drinking from and her environment (ie.level of distraction). Cathy had no concerns about Tamsin's ability to manage a range of solid food consistencies.

During the assessment today Tamsin was observed to drink water from an open cup, a pop-top bottle and a MagMag cup with straw attachment. She was sitting in a well supported, upright position at a small table throughout the trial.

Tamsin demonstrated appropriate independent drinking skills. She was able to maintain good head, neck and trunk stability when drinking and used the range of utensils well. Generally, she demonstrated good oral control of the bolus and a coordinated swallow. When using the pop-top bottle however, she tended to extend her neck, had difficulty controlling the flow rate of the liquid and coughed and choked on the water. Her cough was strong and reflexive. When using the open cup and the cup with straw attachment she adopted a more appropriate drinking position (ie. chin tuck) and was better able to pace her mouthfuls and co-ordinate her swallow.

Tamsin is at moderate risk of aspiration when drinking thin fluids from a pop-top bottle. She is less at risk when drinking from an open cup. The results and implications of the swallow assessment were discussed with Cathy and the following recommendations were made:

- when drinking from an open cup Tamsin should be seated at all times and be encouraged to take small sips and to swallow after every sip.
- when at preschool, Tamsin should drink from a cup or popper with a straw, should be seated at all times for drinks (and meals) and again, be encouraged to take a sip and swallow rather than to drink continuously.

I would be happy to review Tamsin's drinking skills at any time. Please contact me on 9382 0787 if you have any questions or concerns.

Melissa Parkin
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