

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO FEEL THE SALIVA

Many children seem not to notice the saliva until it is too late. When we get enough saliva in our mouths we swallow it automatically and thus we do not dribble. This does not seem to happen to children who dribble. Some children seem very unaware of what is in and around their mouths and can be messy eaters.

Here are some strategies to help. Please be guided by your speech pathologist as to which are most appropriate.

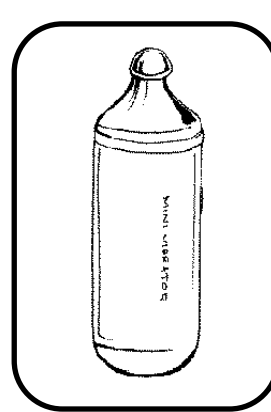
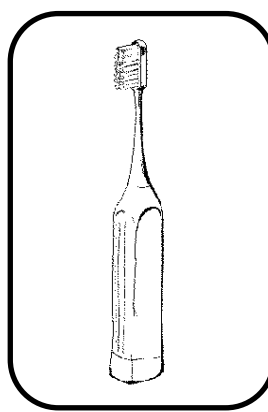
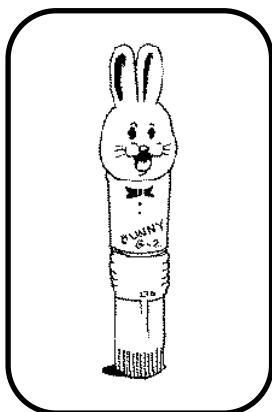
Outside of the mouth

Vibration

Battery operated vibrators can be used to stimulate the muscles in the cheeks and around the lips. Vibrators come in all sorts of shapes but use a small one (or one with a small head). You can also use the back of the head of a battery operated toothbrush (eg *Reach* powerbrush)*.

- 1) Vibrate from the ear to the corner of the lips three times on both sides. At the end of this encourage the child to swallow.
- 2) Vibrate around the mouth. Go from the middle of the lip to the edge on both upper and lower lips. Do each quadrant three times. Encourage lips together and swallow after this.

You can make this into a game e.g shaving.



icing

The use of ice can heighten someone's dull sensation. The research has shown that touching the fauces (arches at the back of the mouth) at the back of the mouth with a thin stick of ice has increased the ability to swallow frequently. This is very difficult to do with children however you can try:

1. Putting chips of ice in the mouth, especially before eating.
2. Using ice in the same way as described in the vibration section. Use a thin icy pole frozen from water in the fridge.
3. Freeze cotton buds and run them down the centre of the child's tongue (in the groove) front to back. Allow to swallow in between.

*You can buy vibrators from a number of different shops. The big body massagers are too big for children. Places like the \$2 shop, ground floor at Daimaru, Granny Mae's (probably around \$15) often have small ones. However these shops do not always have stock. The Orthotic and Prosthetic Centre in Bouverie st, Carlton stock small vibrators for just over \$30.