Eating Activities Using One Hand

If you have weakness on one side from a stroke or injury, follow these steps to improve your eating skills.

**Cutting food with a regular fork**

1. Grasp the fork handle with your strong hand. Turn the fork on its side and place your index finger firmly on the upper edge of the fork tines.

2. Put the side of the fork tip into the item to be cut and rock the fork slightly from side to side to make a cut. Start at the corner or edge of the piece and work in straight lines.

3. After each cut, lift the fork and repeat these steps to cut a bite size piece.

**Cutting food with a rocker knife**

The handle or blade of your rocker knife may look different than the picture, but they all work in much the same way.

1. Grasp the handle with your strong hand and hold with the cutting edge down.

2. Press the knife tip down into the item to be cut and rock the knife back and forth to make the cut.

3. Repeat the steps to cut bite size pieces.


**Spreading things like butter or jam on bread**

Use softened butter or spread to make this easier.

1. Hold a butter knife with your strong hand so the flat side of the blade comes in contact with the bread.

2. Grasp the handle between your thumb, third and fourth finger with your index finger resting on top of the blade.

3. Use your middle finger to hold the bread and push the spread across the bread. Turn the bread and repeat to spread the whole bread.

You can also spread bread by placing the bread against the edge of a tray.

1. Place the bread on upper corner of tray close to your strong hand.

2. Hold the butter knife with your strong hand and begin to spread the bread towards the corner edge of the tray, away from you.

3. Continue to spread this way until the bread is covered. You may need to turn the bread to get all of it covered.

**Using a plate guard**

1. Attach the plate guard to the outside edge of the plate towards your weak hand.

2. Begin eating with your strong hand and push against the plate guard edge to get food onto the fork or spoon. Then lift the fork or spoon straight up to keep food on it. The plate guard also helps keep food on the plate.
Opening a carton

1. Turn the carton so the side to be opened faces front.

2. Place fingers at the back of the carton to hold it and bend back each flap with your thumb.

3. Fold back the two flaps until they touch the top of the carton. Then push forward on both flaps. Make sure the flaps are bent back far enough to open the carton. This can take a great deal of pressure to break the seal.

4. Then use your thumb on one side and middle finger on the other and carefully pinch the outer edges of the flaps together to form the pour spout.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.