

Speech and Language Therapy

Oral Feeding with an Unsafe Swallow

Your / your relative's swallow has been assessed by the Speech and Language Therapist and it is felt that there is a risk of food and drink going down the wrong way and/or choking which could result in recurrent chest infections.

The decision has been made that long term tube feeding e.g. NG/PEG tube is not appropriate for you or your relative.

The decision has been made to continue eating and drinking by mouth even though there is a risk of choking or aspiration (food or drink going down the wrong way into the lungs)

You may hear this called '*feeding with risk*', or '*risk feeding*', or '*comfort feeding*' or '*eating and drinking at acknowledged risk of aspiration*'.

What can help when I am eating and drinking with risk?

Your Speech and Language Therapist can advise on modified consistencies of food or fluids which may be more comfortable.

Sensible precautions when eating and drinking include:

- You must be sitting upright, and be alert.
- Assistance and supervision as required.
- Take small mouthfuls, slowly.
- Smaller, more frequent meals/snacks and drinks may be easier.
- Take plenty of time for each mouthful to be swallowed.
- Avoid the use of straws and spouted cups unless advised, as these may increase risk of choking or aspiration.
- It is important to have foods and drinks you enjoy, but bear in mind advice you have been given about the most comfortable consistencies.

Oral hygiene

Good oral hygiene is important for comfort, and to ensure that bacteria does not build up in the mouth, which can be carried to the lungs and lead to increased risk of chest infections.

- Your mouth should be cleaned frequently, a minimum of twice daily. You may need assistance from nursing/care staff.
- You can use a toothbrush and toothpaste and normal water
- If available, you may want to use a mouth care sponge to remove residue from teeth brushing.
- Dentures should be removed and cleaned. If dentures are very loose it may be best to keep them out, depending on your preference. Avoid leaving dentures in when lying back.
- Mouth care may be required before and after oral intake, especially if there is a build-up of residue.

What can I expect when I eat and drink?

When eating and drinking you may experience any of the following:

- Food collecting in the mouth
- Coughing or choking
- A wet, gurgly voice or noisy breathing
- Shortness of breath after eating and drinking
- If you have any of the above symptoms or experience any discomfort then you may wish to stop temporarily, and try again later
- You may experience weight loss and dehydration.
- You may develop chest infections. It may be appropriate to take no further action, but you should discuss this with your doctor.

The priority is for you to be comfortable.

You may wish to talk to your doctor if you have any discomfort, your health deteriorates and/or you wish to change your mind about eating and drinking and want to consider other options for nutrition.

Your G.P. will be aware of the decision to continue oral intake and should be the point of contact for further management when you are in the community.

You may be supportive by a palliative care approach.

Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the information in this handout further, please speak to your Doctor or Speech and Language Therapist.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Inpatient Adult Speech and Language Team

Telephone: 01422 224248

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਚ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ طریبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم
المذكور أعلاه"