



Patient & Family Guide
2020

Safe Eating Guidelines

Aussi disponible en français : *Lignes directrices
pour s'alimenter sans danger* (FF85-2175)



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Safe Eating Guidelines

- Some people have problems swallowing. This means that some food or liquid may go into your airway instead of your stomach. This is called aspiration. Aspiration is the word used when food or liquid ‘goes down the wrong way’.
- Not everyone coughs right away when food or liquid goes down the wrong way. This is called silent aspiration.
- Sometimes aspiration can lead to a blocked airway or pneumonia (lung infection). It can also make eating and drinking uncomfortable.

The following signs may mean you are having a swallowing problem with certain foods:

- › coughing or choking during or after eating
- › clearing your throat often
- › hoarse or a wet, gurgly voice
- › feeling of food getting stuck in your throat
- › pocketing food in your cheek
- › holding food or liquid in your mouth for a long time
- › drooling, loss of food, or liquid from your mouth
- › avoiding solid food
- › having fevers or chest infections often

Call your primary health care provider or 811 if you have:

- › fever
- › shortness of breath
- › more chest congestion
- › more coughing during or after meals

The Swallow Team has been involved in your care. They have given you advice on what to eat and drink. There are also Swallow Guidelines that can help you swallow safely.

When eating and drinking everyone should:

- Be alert and well-rested.
- Sit up while eating.
- Stay upright for 30 minutes after a meal to prevent reflux (food or liquid flowing back into your throat).
- Take only small sips.
- Drink from a cup or glass. Do not drink from a bottle.
- Take only 1 teaspoon-size bite at a time.
- Chew food well.
- Allow lots of time between bites.
- Do not talk while eating.
- Eat in a quiet area.

- Cut down on distractions. For example, don't eat in front of the TV or with a lot of company.

If the boxes below are checked, follow these recommendations:

You need “mealtime supports” such as:

- caregiver with you while you are eating
 - caregiver needs to set-up your meals
 - caregiver must feed you your meals
 - Use the following adaptive (special designed) utensils:
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-
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More safe swallow recommendations:

- Do not drink while eating. Never take a drink with food in your mouth.
- Do not use a straw for liquids.
- May use a straw for liquids.
- Place food on stronger side of mouth.
- Check mouth after meals for pocketed food.

Medications:

- Take medications as you are able, with food or liquid.
- Take medications whole in puréed food like applesauce, yogurt, or pudding.
- Take medications crushed in puréed food like applesauce, yogurt, or pudding. Ask your pharmacist if it is safe to crush your medications.

Tips for caregivers (if you need help from a caregiver):

- Give enough time for each meal. Do not rush while eating.
- Make sure the person's head is supported upright and not extended back.
- Watch for each swallow before giving the next bite or sip.
- Encourage the person to feed themselves, if possible. To help them, you may use “hand-over-hand” assistance.
- Sit at the person's eye level.
- Check the person's mouth after meals for pocketed food.
- Mouth care should be given after each meal (see tips on pages 5 and 6).

More recommendations:

Mouth care is important to lower the risk of pneumonia.

Tips for good mouth care if you have your own NATURAL TEETH (no dentures):

- Brush teeth after each meal and before bedtime.
- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Don't rush the brush. Brush all surfaces of every tooth.
- Brush tongue from back to front using long sweeping strokes.
- Spit out toothpaste, but do not rinse with water to get the full effect of fluoride.
- Floss teeth daily. Floss picks, F-shaped or Y-shaped flossing tools, or GUM® Soft-Picks® may help.

Tips for good mouth care if you have DENTURES:

- If you have dentures, take them out and clean them each day. Store them in a clean denture cup filled with clean water.
- Take out dentures and brush after each meal and before bedtime.
- Use a denture brush.
- Brush tongue from back to front using long sweeping strokes with a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Rinse mouth with water or alcohol-free mouth rinse, if possible. Swish and spit out all liquid.
- Soak dentures overnight in denture cleaner.

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Speech Language Pathologist:

Phone: _____

Date: _____

