



Safe Swallowing

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SAFE DINING



- Always follow dining plans/guidelines exactly. These plans are made to keep the person safe while dining and to support good nutrition, dignity, and independence.
- Before meals, review dining guidelines and ask for help if you have questions. Don't guess because that can put someone at risk.
- Report any concerns with eating, chewing, or swallowing to a supervisor.
- Keep people as upright as possible, close to table.
- Provide needed adapted dining equipment as specified by dining plan.
- Recommend the use of glasses, hearing aids, or dentures when dining if people require them.
- Eating should be a positive experience. Reduce distractions and encourage people to pay attention while eating for safe swallowing.
- Encourage people to finish chewing and swallowing before talking.
- Avoid mixing food together on the plate. Serve main dishes separately from side dishes and do not mix them together.
- Serve small to medium portions based on individual need. This will slow eating and limit how much food is taken into the mouth at once.
- Encourage eating only one bite at a time.
- Provide a smaller spoon for eating. Use of tablespoons (big spoons) can result in putting too much food in the mouth at once.
- Provide a fork for cut-up finger foods.
- Encourage small sips throughout the meal and at the end of the meal. "Guzzling" drinks can be dangerous.
- There is no substitution for close supervision while eating. Try to sit with people as they eat.