

CHOKING PREVENTION AND NUTRITION

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DYSPHAGIA

- Difficulty with swallowing
- Due to problems with
 - Nerves, or
 - Muscle control
- Compromises nutrition and hydration
- Can lead to:
 - Dehydration
 - Aspiration
 - Aspiration Pneumonia
 - Other infections, e.g. Urinary Tract Infection

Signs and Symptoms of Choking

- Coughing/gagging
- Wet, gurgly sounds
- Unable to vocalize
- Universal sign of choking-grab throat
- Wheezing
- Sudden change in motor activity
- Facial expressions of distress
- Abnormal skin color
- Increased mucus, spitting or drooling
- Sneezing, nasal regurgitation
- Refusal of food or liquids
- Turning head away from food
- Change in breathing pattern

Signs and Symptoms of Aspiration

- Chronic runny nose
- Frequent URIs
- Elevated temperature after eating
- Increased mucus or secretions
- Sneezing
- Vomiting
- Frequent episodes of pneumonia
- Overall poor intake
- Loss of weight

DYSPHAGIA

- Physician or speech therapist may recommend:
 - Tests for swallowing
 - Barium Swallow
 - Cookie Swallow
 - Video fluoroscopy

DYSPHAGIA

- Physician or speech therapist may recommend:
 - Special diet:
 - Pureed diet
 - Ground (Mechanical Soft, or Training)
 - Chopped (Modified)
 - Combination Chopped and Ground
 - Food/Liquid Thickeners

Pureed Diet

- Foods which do not require chewing
- Good for people with chewing/swallowing problems
- Adequate in all nutrients
- Meats are pureed, to smooth consistency
- Served in a broth or cream sauce
- Vegetables and fruits are pureed
- Soft desserts are permitted

Ground (Mechanical Soft or Training Diet)

- Used for clients with the following
 - Difficulty in chewing
 - Malformed throat, thick tongue, or other abnormality causing feeding problem
 - Choking during mealtimes
- Diet is adequate for all nutrients
- Foods are softer, due to:
 - Cooking
 - Mashing, or
 - Using soft food

Chopped (Modified Diet)

- For clients with decreased sensation or muscle strength for chewing
- Is adequate in all nutrients
- Individualized based on client's ability to chew and swallow
- Foods are diced, chopped, or bite size as tolerated
- May add cream sauce, gravies
- May soak bread or toast in liquid
- May be combination of chopped or ground

Thickeners

- Thickeners may be added to:
 - Food, Liquids, or Both
- Thickeners
 - “Thick-It”
- Consistencies of thickening:
 - Nectar
 - Honey
 - Spoon-thick, e.g., pudding

High Risk Foods for Choking

- Hot dogs
- Sticky foods
 - Peanut butter
 - Cream cheese
 - Cheddar cheese
- Foods that crumble
 - Rice
 - Dry, scrambled eggs
- Stringy foods (sausages with skins, celery)
- Tough meats
- Fish with bone

High Risk Foods for Choking

- Large pieces of salad
- Mixed vegetables (corn, peas)
- Peas, corn
- Fruits with skins and membranes
 - Apple skins
 - Orange section members
 - Grapes
- Bread, tortillas

High Risk Foods for Choking

- Hard candies
- Nuts
- Rubbery Jello
- Mixed textures (creamy with lumps)
- Potato chips
- Medications
 - Tablets

Liquids and Choking

- Thin liquids can be problem
- Sweet liquids and toothpaste can increase saliva
- Milk products increase mucus or thick saliva