

DID YOU KNOW?

Being fed by someone else increases the risk of aspiration

DIFFERENCES WHEN BEING FED BY ANOTHER PERSON

- The person being fed does not always have the opportunity to
 - Prepare his/her body for eating by:
 - Choose his/her own food
 - Look at food that is nicely placed on his/her plate
 - Smell the aroma of food
 - Know when the food is going to be placed in his/her mouth
- Often he/she is fed by someone who has many other things to do
- Meals are hurried and a task to be completed rather than a pleasurable social time

The Eating Process

1. Become hungry
2. Choose what to eat
3. Notice look and smell of food
4. Begin to produce saliva
5. Body prepares itself to eat
6. Eat at own pace!
7. Enjoy the food and the process



DECREASING THE RISK OF ASPIRATION

Remember the best option is for a person to feed his/herself. If possible, assist eating using hand over hand techniques

If you are feeding someone:

- Ensure proper positioning
- Sit with the person. This is respectful. It also provides a good observation vantage point
- Observe the way in which food is taken into the mouth from the utensil. Does the person close his/her lips over the utensil to remove food?
- Observe how he/she chews and manipulates food in the mouth. **Do mouth movements look coordinated? Are lips closed to chew?** Manage the food efficiently (get it out of the cheeks and onto the tongue)?
- Observe swallowing. Do they swallow more than once to clear the mouth of food? Cough when swallowing?
- Did all of the food clear the mouth before the next bite is placed into the mouth?
- Report difficulties to supervisor for swallowing assessment

TIPS FOR FEEDING

- ✓ Sit with the person while feeding him/her
- ✓ Offering choices of food/fluid
- ✓ Placing food attractively on the plate
- ✓ Talk about the food (Looks good, smells good, I know you like...)
- ✓ Tell the person when the food is going to be placed in his/her mouth
- ✓ Remember that eating is a social event

FEEDING SOMEONE WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

- The person may be unable to tell you if he/she feels discomfort with being fed
- Without words the person may use “behaviour” to tell others what is happening

Indications of discomfort include:

- Refusing to eat all or part of a meal
- Refusing all but one or two kinds of food
- Refusing to eat for some people but not others
- Food drooling out of the mouth (caused by poor lip closure)
- Tongue thrusting forward

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THE RISK OF ASPIRATION [CHOKING]

Aspiration occurs when food passes below the level of the vocal chords into the lungs
It can be silent and the observer may not be able to notice

PREVENTING ASPIRATION

- Refusing to eat is a communication behaviour that tells you something is wrong. Stop feeding the person and seek advice
- Recognize regurgitation as a possible sign of dysphagia
- Report coughing during or after a meal
- Person should sit upright for ½ hour after a meal to assist with digestion

SIGNS OF DYSPHAGIA

If the person feeds themselves, they may use behaviour to tell others. He/she could:

- Eat/drink too quickly
- Hoard food
- Stuff food in his/her cheeks
- Steal food from others
- Refuse all but one or two kinds of food
- Refusing to eat for certain people