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Dietary In-Service

Safe Feeding Practices

Safe feeding practices help to ensure Residents receive adequate nutrition & hydration in a manner to minimize or prevent health complications. Safe feeding practices are particularly important for Residents with dysphagia (swallowing difficulty), as they can significantly reduce the risk of coughing, choking and aspirating (breathing in foreign object). Let's take a look at some of the dos & don'ts of safe feeding!

✓ DO:

1. Wash Your Hands

- Wash hands before assisting Residents and perform hand hygiene in between assisting other Residents



2. Confirm Resident Nutrition Plan of Care

- Identify the Resident's **Diet, Texture, Fluid Consistency** and **Interventions** at every meal & snack
- This can be found on the **Dietary Database**, available at point-of-service
- Ensure Residents are sitting in their designated seat to reduce confusion when delivering meals and beverages

3. Check for Dentures

- Ensure dentures are securely applied, with dental adhesive as needed

4. Ensure Safe Feeding Position

- Ensure Residents are sitting upright in their chair (90° angle), chin down & tucked under
- Residents should remain upright for 30 minutes after eating/drinking to reduce the risk of any remaining food or fluid residue going into the lungs

5. Proper Staff Positioning

- Staff should be seated on the Residents **dominant side**
- If seated to the **left** of the Resident, **use your left hand** to assist feeding
- If seated to the **right** of the Resident, **use your right hand** to assist feeding

6. Offer ½ - 1 Teaspoon Sized Bites of Food & Small Sips of Fluid

- Too much food or fluid at one time can increase the risk of choking
- Check that there is minimal residue of food in mouth after swallow



7. Monitor Tolerance to Diet Order & Notify Registered Staff

- If a Resident is coughing, choking or pocketing food/fluid, notify a Registered Staff Member immediately!

X DON'T:

1. Serve a Resident if Not Alert

- Be sure the Resident is awake and alert **before** serving them food/fluid
- Provide reminders, cues and assistance, when needed
- If a Resident refuses to eat or drink, do not force them and honour their wishes

2. Feed Too Quickly

- Feed at a moderate pace that the Resident can tolerate
- Be sure the Resident has fully swallowed before offering more food/fluid

3. Stand While Feeding

- Always sit at **eye level** with the Resident

4. Put Food/Fluid in a Resident's Mouth Without Warning

- Always inform the Resident what is happening next
- *"Mr. Smith, here is another sip of water"* or *"Mr. J, are you ready for more cereal?"*

5. Feed >2 Residents at Once

- Feeding >2 Residents at once can be distracting & less pleasurable for the Resident

6. Mix Foods

- Do not mix foods together unless the Resident requests this or is stated in their Plan of Care
- We often eat with our eyes and the end result may not be visually appealing or tasty

7. Engage in Personal Conversations

- Meal times are Resident-focused times; focus on feeding Residents safely and monitoring tolerance
- If conversing with Residents, ensure they swallow food and fluids first before having them respond



REMEMBER: following these DOS and DON'TS of safe feeding can help to reduce the risks to our Residents and have a positive impact on their nutritional & social well-being!

