

Swallowing safety to prevent aspiration

“Aspiration” means breathing food and liquid into the lungs.

This can cause choking or an infection.



Green zone

You are in control.



Yellow zone

Take action today.
Call:



Red zone

Take action now!
Call:



Do I know what foods are safe for me to eat?	<p>I know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What foods I can eat. • How to prepare food so it is easy to swallow. 	<p>I am not sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What foods I can eat. • How my food should be prepared. 	I am afraid to eat because I worry I might choke.
Do I know what liquids are safe for me to drink?	<p>I know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What liquids I can drink. • How to prepare them so they are easy to swallow. 	<p>I am not sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What liquids I can drink. • How my liquid should be prepared. 	I am afraid to drink because I worry I might choke.
Do I have trouble chewing or swallowing?	I do not have trouble chewing or swallowing.	I have some trouble chewing or swallowing.	I can hardly swallow.
Can I sit up to eat and drink?	I can sit up to eat and drink.	I have trouble sitting up to eat and drink.	I cannot sit up at all – even to eat and drink.
How is my voice and breathing?	My voice and breathing sound and feel like they usually do.	My voice and breathing sound wet or gurgled.	I am choking or coughing while I eat.

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Main Line Health®
HomeCare & Hospice

My plan to keep from breathing food or liquid into my lungs (aspiration)

How to prepare my food

- ☐ **No special changes needed** – I can eat all foods.
- ☐ **Chop some** – chop tough or hard to chew foods. Soft foods like lunch meat can be eaten whole.
- ☐ **Chop all** – grind up or eat soft food so there is no need to chew.
- ☐ **Puree** – blend all foods until they are smooth so there is no need to chew.

How to prepare my liquids

- ☐ **No special changes needed** – I can drink all liquids (thick or thin).
- ☐ **Nectar-thick** – drink liquids that are thickened just a little. Nectar-thick liquids are thin enough to go through a straw, like a milkshake.
- ☐ **Honey-thick** – drink liquids that are as thick as room temperature honey. Honey-thick liquids would run off a spoon but are too thick to drink using a straw, like honey or thick yogurt.
- ☐ **Pudding-thick** – drink liquids that are thick enough to stay on a spoon without running off. Pudding-thick liquids are like thick apple sauce or milk pudding.

When eating and drinking

- ☐ Sit up – propped with pillows or in a chair.
- ☐ Take my time.
- ☐ Eat small bites and take small sips.
- ☐ Put my chin to my chest when swallowing.

Notes:

Your care team will work with you to set goals so you can stick to your plan.