



Choking Prevention Tips

Choking Prevention Tip #1: Organization

1. Get everything ready before starting the meal so that you can supervise at the table while the person who is eating.
2. Have diet orders, mealtime strategies, and supervision requirements in an easily accessible spot. Try organizing them in a binder kept in the dining area.
3. If preparing lunch for the day program, ensure prescribed diets are adhered to.
4. All grounds and pureed foods should be labeled when sent to the day program.



Choking Prevention Tip #2: Positioning/Seating

- Positioning is very important— upright at the table, feet on the floor, and hips against the back of the chair.
- People in wheelchairs should be repositioned just before they eat.
- Avoid allowing individuals to eat while laying down/reclining, standing, walking, in front of the TV, or in the car.



Choking Prevention Tip #3: Helpful Practices

- Portion meals using small plates, small cups, and small utensils if warranted for the individual. A prescription may be required. Refill the plate or cup as needed.
- Encourage all individuals to alternate every few bites with a sip of liquid. This can assist with pacing and wash down any food that may get stuck in the mouth/throat.
- Enjoy foods with added moisture (extra condiments on sandwiches, dipping sauces, etc.)
- Keep meal and snack schedules predictable and consistent. This may reduce food grabbing caused by hunger or a late snack/meal.



Choking prevention Tip #4: Reacting in an Emergency

- If choking occurs, call 911 as per Danielle's Law – only trained medical personnel can ensure the person's airway is clear.
- If an individual starts coughing while eating, DO NOT give them water or any other food/beverage. Coughing is a defense mechanism, and the individual should be given the opportunity to cough the food out.
- If coughing becomes severe or if breathing becomes impacted, implement first aid strategies and your facility's choking response protocol (e.g., abdominal thrusts, back blows, CPR).

