Foods that may Increase Risk of Aspiration
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The checked groups of foods below are the ones most likely to cause problems for you. These foods may increase your risk of aspiration. This means food or liquid goes into your lungs instead of your stomach. Avoid these foods.

☐ Foods of more than one texture

• Citrus fruit and other juicy fruit like watermelon.
• Soups with solids in them like vegetables, pasta, or meat.
  Recommended options:
  › Blend soups to make them a single texture.
  › Strain and eat the liquid and solids separately.
• Cold cereal with milk.
  Recommended options:
  › Let cereal soak up milk and drain off extra milk.
  › Blend cereal to make it a single texture.
  › Eat hot cereal with milk mixed in instead.
• Canned fruit with juice.
  Recommendation:
  › Drain canned fruit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sticky foods</strong></th>
<th><strong>Foods that do not stick together</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>Fresh white bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butterscotch sauce</td>
<td>Bagels, sticky buns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry mashed potatoes</td>
<td>Thick fudge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bread dressing</td>
<td>Caramel</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foods with stringy fibers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beef (except moist ground)</td>
<td>Asparagus</td>
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<tr>
<td>String beans</td>
<td>Celery</td>
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<td>Pork or lamb chops</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fennel</td>
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<td><strong>Foods with small pits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>Cherries</td>
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<td>Grapes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard candy</td>
<td>Hot dogs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Safe Eating Guidelines

When you have a swallowing problem (dysphagia), you have a greater risk of aspiration. This means food or liquid goes into your lungs instead of your stomach. This may cause pneumonia.

The following signs may mean you have a swallowing problem:

• Coughing or choking during or after eating.
• Frequent throat clearing.
• Hoarse or wet, gurgly voice.
• Feeling of food getting stuck in your throat.
• Pocketing food in your cheek.
• Holding food or liquid in your mouth for a long time.
• Drooling, loss of food or liquid from your mouth.
• Avoiding solid food.
• Frequent chest infections.

Mouth care is important to reduce the risk of pneumonia

Here are some tips for good mouth care:

• Clean your mouth after each meal using a soft toothbrush.
• Clean your mouth and tongue every morning and
at bedtime with toothbrush and toothpaste.

- Pour alcohol-free mouthwash onto your toothbrush. Wipe around the inside of your mouth and tongue with your toothbrush. This helps to get rid of bacteria.

If you have dentures, take them out and clean them daily. Store them in a clean denture cup filled with clean water.

**Safe eating tips for you at home**

**Head position:**

**Body position:**

- Sit upright.
- Stay sitting upright for 30 minutes after meals.

**Setting:**

- Eat in a quiet area.
- Limit talking.
- Limit distractions. For example, don’t eat in front of the TV.
**Liquids:**  ☐ Thick / ☐ Thin

- Do not use straws.
- Take only small sips.
- Drink from a cup or a glass.
- Drink slowly.

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**Solid food:**

- Only eat one teaspoonful at a time.
- Chew your food well.

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**Medications:**

- Take them whole or crushed in pureed food like applesauce or pudding.
- Make sure pills are safe to crush before crushing.

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**Feeding strategies:**

- Allow enough time for each meal. Do not rush while eating.
- Swallow before taking the next bite or sip.
- Promote self-feeding if possible. You may use hand over hand to help with self-feeding.
- Caregiver should feed from a sitting position at eye level.
Call your doctor if:
• You have a fever.
• Your chest is congested.
• You are coughing during or after meals.

Dietitian: ________________________________
Phone: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Notes:

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles, and online health information.
For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to www.publiclibraries.ns.ca

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