



Comprehensive Stroke Care Centre
SREE CHITRA TIRUNAL INSTITUTE
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695011.

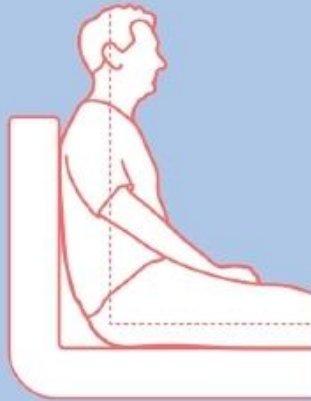
Safe Swallowing

Information leaflet for stroke patients and carers



Tips to avoid aspiration and choking

- ❖ Always eat food slowly and carefully. Do not pay attention to anything else while eating. Avoid talking and watching television during meals.



- ❖ For those who have difficulty in sitting, the spine should be raised with the help of a pillow on a chair or against a wall. Do not eat while you are leaning back or lying down. Always try to keep the spine raised (90°). Sit in the same position for twenty to thirty minutes after the feed.

- ❖ Each time eat or feed only small amounts of food and water.
- ❖ Give only small teaspoons of food. Give a teaspoon of water and after drinking it give the next teaspoon. If drinking water with a glass, instruct to take a small sip of water.





- ❖ Do not pull the head back while eating or drinking water. Do not sip water or juice with a straw. During intake of food or water in the mouth, think carefully about what you are taking and swallow the food.
- ❖ Take one bite of food at a time.
- ❖ Be sure to swallow all the food in your mouth before taking the next bite. Otherwise the food stays in the throat and later causes shortness of breath and coughing.
- ❖ If taking solid food, take it after mixing with the curry or sauce so that it gets softened. Swallow the solid food only after chewing it well. After swallowing, drink a sip of water. Repeat the same.
- ❖ It is better to avoid very spicy foods.

- ❖ Do not take food of different consistency together. For example, if you take soup, take only soup at that time. Do not take solid food along with it.
- ❖ If you find it difficult to push back the food with your tongue, place it behind your tongue as soon as you put food in your mouth.
- ❖ If the facial muscles are weak, chew the food on the side without weakness. Food and water may leak out of the mouth due to weakness of the muscles of cheek. If the muscles of the lips are weak, hold the food in your mouth and hold both lips together with your fingers.
- ❖ Try to feed small amounts of food at regular intervals.
- ❖ If you feel any obstruction in your throat while eating, try to spit out the food as much as possible. Clean your mouth well after taking food.
- ❖ Brush the teeth and rinse the mouth thoroughly with water after food intake. Otherwise food particles that remain in the mouth will go down into the airway which may lead to choking and increased risk of infections.

❖ Important points to remember

- ❖ Feed only after making sure that the patient is well awake.
- ❖ Feed only after sitting upright.
- ❖ Make sure that patient's mouth is clean before and after meals.
- ❖ Take time and feed slowly in small quantities.
- ❖ Make sure that the patient swallows all the food in his mouth before giving the next feed.
- ❖ Give the next mouthful only after make sure that one mouthful of food has been swallowed completely.
- ❖ Do not allow patients to talk or be distracted while eating.



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