Aspiration

Aspiration is the medical term used to describe the entry of foreign material in to the lungs - including food particles/liquid. Aspiration of food/liquids can lead to chest infections/pneumonia. The guidelines within this leaflet are designed to maximise the safety of your swallow.

Signs of Aspiration

Immediate signs:

- Coughing
- Throat clearing
- Gurgly/wet vocal quality
- Changes or difficulties breathing
- Eye tearing
- Reddening of face
- Gagging
- Pain on swallowing

Ongoing signs:

- Recurrent chest infections
- Pneumonia
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Frequent high temperatures
- Food refusal
- Loss of interest in food

Contact us

If you have any questions please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department.

Tel: 01 414 2776

Your Speech and Language Therapist is:

Name: _____

Bleep No: _____

Phone: _____

Print and Design by Medical Photography and Illustration Department

MPSLT010-03

Tallaght University Hospital | Ospidéal Ollscoile Thamhlachta

An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Information for swallowing safely



You have been recommended to take the following fluids:

- ***Free Fluids***: Normal drinks that do not need to be thickened



- ***Grade 1 fluids***: Very mildly thick, fast flow but slower than regular fluids (Add half scoop of 'nutilis clear thickener' to 200mls fluid, one scoop for milk)



- ***Grade 2 fluids:*** Mildly thick fluids, steady flow (Add one scoop of 'nutilis clear thickener' to 200mls of fluid, 1 ½ scoops for milk)



- ***Grade 3 fluids:*** Moderately thick fluids, cohesive and slow flowing (Add 2 scoops of 'nutilis clear thickener' to 200mls of fluid)



- ***Grade 4 fluids:*** Extremely thick fluids, no flow, needs to be taken from a spoon (Add 3 scoops of ' nutilis clear thickener' to 200mls of fluid)



- **Use fork to mix thickener, stir vigorously for 15-30 seconds and leave to stand for a minute.**
- **Your Speech and Language Therapist will provide you with information on thickening liquids appropriately**

Diet Modification:

- **Normal diet**: All food/textures allowed e.g. biscuit; crusty bread



- **Soft Diet**: May be naturally soft or cooked/cut to alter texture e.g. soft sandwich (no crusts) with moist filling; soft cheese



- **Minced-moist**: Soft, moist and easily mashed with a fork e.g. mashed soft fresh fruit; minced meat with sauce



- **Smooth Purée:** Smooth moist and lump free e.g. pureed meat, pureed vegetables; yoghurt, custard



Safe Swallow Strategies

- Always sit upright when eating and drinking
- Be fully awake/alert
- Allow plenty of time to swallow between mouthfuls
- If you feel there is still residue in your throat take a small sip of fluids to wash it down – you could also cough and then swallow again
- If you have difficulty swallowing your tablets, try swallowing them in yoghurt instead of water

Specific Strategies to Help You