



Safe Swallowing Tips

If your doctor has allowed you to eat or drink by mouth, please follow these safe eating suggestions:

General Tips

- Always sit up (90 degrees) when eating or drinking
- Sit upright for 20 minutes after eating or drinking
- Take small bites of food and small sips of liquid
- Chew your food very well before swallowing
- Pay attention when you are eating (e.g., Turn TV/radio off)
- Don't talk while eating
- Take one bite at a time (eat slowly)
- Swallow twice for every mouthful
- Keep your chin level (i.e., look straight ahead) when swallowing
- Ensure that you keep your mouth very clean

Signs of Trouble

Aspiration is when food/liquids enter into the lungs. Repeated aspiration of food/liquids can cause infection in the lungs (Aspiration Pneumonia). The following are signs that food or drink may have gone towards the lungs.

- Frequent coughing
- Frequent throat clearing
- Gurgly/wet sounding voice
- Pneumonia/chest problems

A person having any or all of the above signs should speak to a doctor.

If you have any questions about the information on this handout, please contact your local Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centre.

1-888-780-3330
www.nshsc.ns.ca