

Feeding a Person

1. Talk with the person you care for about their likes and dislikes of food. Find out what types of seasoning they use and the temperature they like their foods.
2. If the person is on a special diet, be sure you have instructions from their doctor or dietitian.
3. Know if the person has any swallowing problems. Ask if he or she has trouble swallowing or if food pockets in their mouth.
4. Wash your hands for 15 seconds.
5. Wash all fresh vegetables and fruits thoroughly in cool water.
6. As the food is cooking or when it is almost time to serve a meal, get the person ready:
 - a. Have the person use the bathroom or help them if needed.
 - b. Have the person wash his or her hands.
 - c. Offer to help brush their teeth or clean their dentures. A clean mouth improves a person's appetite.
 - d. Have the person put on his or her eyeglasses or contacts so he or she can see the food.
 - e. Assist the person to sit up in a chair or help him or her to sit upright in bed and supported with pillows. The 90 degree upright position helps to prevent a person from choking on food.
7. Make sure the meal looks appealing when you place food on plates or bowls. Remove clutter from the table or meal tray.
8. If the person has trouble seeing, arrange the food on the plate as if it were the face of a clock. Tell the person where things are located, e.g. The meat is at 12 o'clock, the potatoes are at 4 o'clock.
9. If a person has trouble remembering, place items on the table in the same location for each meal.
10. Be sure you have the appropriate utensils. Some persons eat more easily with utensils that have enlarged handles or grips and plates with plate guards. If you are feeding the person, use regular utensils.
11. Straws make it easy for a person to drink fluids. NEVER use straws if the person has dysphagia, trouble swallowing.
12. Prepare the meal according to the person's needs. Help cut the food into bite size pieces if needed. Season food to the person's preferences.
13. At this point let the person feed himself or herself. Stay at their side to have a normal conversation or return in about 10 minutes to see how they are doing. Mealtime should be a pleasant time and not rushed.
14. If a person needs help with eating.
 - a. Sit next to him or her and stay relaxed.
 - b. Take your time.

- c. Place a napkin or small towel over the person to protect clothes or bedding. Do not use a bib. Do not call a napkin a bid. Do not embarrass the person for needing help.
 - d. Ask the person what order of food he or she would like to eat.
 - e. Feed the person to make chewing and swallowing easier. In an older adult, offer small portions. Watch how they bite, chew and swallow. Be sure that between each bite the person has swallowed the food.
 - f. When a person has trouble remembering the steps of certain activities, such as eating, it is helpful for you to remind them to swallow. Tell the person he or she is doing a good job as the meal progresses.
 - g. If the person has a neurologic problem, like Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis, feed small amounts at a time. Allow a minute in between bites or longer. Watch his or her ability to chew and form a ball of food to swallow. Often these persons have trouble moving food to the back of the mouth to swallow.
 - h. Watch the person you are feeding for coughing, gagging, or difficulty in swallowing. You will want to report this to their doctor. If coughing or choking occurs, STOP feeding the person.
 - i. You may need to thicken liquids with thickener recommended by your dietician
 - j. If giving liquids, offer small amounts of liquid on a teaspoon to a person who has difficulty drinking from a cup or glass.
 - k. Do not hurry. Give spoonfuls to the side of their mouth, touching the mouth and tongue with the spoon
 - l. If the person can swallow, offer liquids as the person requests. Do not let a person drink all liquids before eating. Drinking all liquids at first will fill them up and make them not want to eat.
15. Remember to pace both yourself and the person you are feeding during a meal. You do not want the person to tire. If they try to feed themselves, be patient.
16. Make mealtime pleasant. This is a good time to observe and take note of the person's appetite. How much does he or she eat, do you notice improvements?
17. At the end of the meal, have the person wash the hands. Give them a chance to brush their teeth.
18. Help the person in bed assume a comfortable position. Continuing to sit up helps their digestion.

The Heimlich Maneuver – when a person is choking

1. The Heimlich maneuver is a procedure that removes a foreign object from a person who is choking **and** cannot breathe, cough, or speak.
2. The most common foreign object is food. Choking is a life-threatening situation because the foreign object is blocking the person's airway and they cannot breathe.
3. The Heimlich Maneuver involves reaching around the waist of a choking person and performing a series of abdominal thrusts under the ribcage. This causes pressure enough to eject the foreign object out of the person's throat, allowing them to breathe again.
4. **Use the Heimlich Maneuver only on a conscious adult and for children over age 1. It is not recommended for infants under age 1.**
5. Abdominal thrusts lift the diaphragm and force enough air from the lungs to create an artificial cough. The cough then moves and pushes out any food or object from the person's throat. This unblocks the person's airway.
6. If a person begins to choke on food and cannot cough it out, talk, or has trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.
7. Heimlich Maneuver with Person Sitting or Standing
 - a. While waiting for the emergency response, stand or kneel behind the person, wrap your arms around the person's waist.
 - b. If the person is standing, place one of your legs between his or her legs so you can support the person if he or she faints.
 - c. Make a fist with the hand you use most, and place the thumb side of your fist against the person's stomach, just above the belly button but below the ribcage.
 - d. Grasp your fist with the other hand. Give a quick upward thrust up into the belly. This may cause the person to cough and push the food out. Use more force for a large person and less force for a child or small adult.
 - e. You may need to do the maneuver again until the food pops out or the person faints
 - f. Stay with the person until emergency responders arrive. When someone has a choking episode and a Heimlich Maneuver is needed, they should always see a doctor afterwards.
8. Heimlich Maneuver with Person Lying on Floor
 - a. If you cannot reach around the person's waist, call 911 and do the following: Ease the person to the floor and place him or her on their back.
 - b. Facing the person, kneel with your legs on either side of the person's hips.
 - c. Place the heel of your bottom hand on the person's upper abdomen or stomach. Make sure your hand is below the rib cage and above the belly button.

- d. Use your body weight to press into the victim's upper abdomen with a quick upward thrust. Repeat the thrust until the object is coughed out.
- e. Stay with the person until emergency personnel arrive.