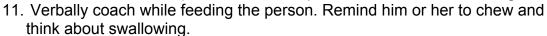
Aspiration Precautions

- 1. Watch the person you care for eat a meal. Look for signs of dysphagia, such as a wet sounding voice, coughing while eating, drooling, or gagging.
- 2. Wash your hands for 15 seconds before you begin to prepare food and feed the person.
- 3. Prepare foods recommended by the dietitian.
- 4. Have the person brush their teeth and rinse their mouth or provide denture care (see our lessons on **Mouth Care** and **Denture Care**).
- 5. Help the person sit up straight in a chair or in bed **at least 45 degrees**. If the person is limited in mobility, have them sit up as far as he or she can.
- 6. If the dietitian recommends it, add thickener to liquids.
- 7. Have the person assume a chin-tuck position by tucking the chin down toward the chest.
- 8. Have the person first try sips of water. Watch for swallowing problems at this time. Ask the person if they can breathe okay.
- If the person has no problems, have them drink a larger amount of water followed by different consistencies of foods and liquids.
- 10. When you feed the person, place ½ teaspoon of food on their unaffected side of mouth (side where sensation and
 - movement are normal). Let the fork or spoon touch the mouth or tongue.



- 12. During the meal, observe for coughing, choking, gagging, and drooling. **Stop** feeding if the person has any of these problems.
- 13. Do not rush the person while eating. Allow time for chewing and swallowing.
- 14. Alternate solids and sips of liquids during the meal. Give the person a chance to rest after several bites.
- 15. Then have the person open the mouth and look to see if they pocket food in their mouth. You might want to use a small flash light and tongue blade to check
- 16. If the person has dementia, show them how to chew and swallow as you feed them.
- 17. Have the person sit up straight for at least 30 minutes after a meal.
- 18. After the meal, have the person brush and rinse their teeth or dentures. Assist as needed.
- 19. Wash your hands and store away supplies.



Heimlich Maneuver

If a person begins to choke and has trouble breathing and/or cannot make sounds, try to get the food out of their mouth and call 911 immediately. While waiting for emergency services perform the Heimlich Maneuver:

- 1. Only use the maneuver on conscious adults and children over the age of 1. Do not use for infants under age 1.
- 2. Stand or kneel behind the person choking.
- 3. Wrap your arms around their waist.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Make a fist with your strong or dominant hand.
- 6. Place the thumb side of your fist against the person's belly, just above the belly button but well below the breastbone.
- 7. 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.
- 8. Use more force for a large person and less force for a child or small adult
- 9. You may need to do the maneuver again until the food pops out of the mouth or the person faints.
- 10. Stay with the person until emergency responders arrive.







