

# Tips to Lessen Your Risk of Choking

Each person will have an individualized plan, with guidelines specific to their needs.

ALTERED  
CONSISTENCY  
DIET

## SOME SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU SIT AT THE TABLE PROPERLY

Enjoy your meals with less risk of choking when you sit in the proper position at the table.



- ✓ It is very important that you sit properly for eating your meals. Improper positioning might increase the risk of aspiration and make it harder to eat, adding to a loss of independence.
- ✓ Use a chair that will allow you to sit close to the table.
- ✓ Sit straight in a chair with hips positioned back in the seat forming a 90-degree angle.
- ✓ Your thighs should be fully supported.
- ✓ Bend your knees at a comfortable angle and have your feet fully supported.
- ✓ Both your arms should be supported, which helps keep your body upright and in center of chair.
- ✓ Do not tilt your head backwards while eating or drinking, tuck chin in slightly.

“Even if you have swallowing challenges, eating foods you enjoy can lead to improved nutrition, desired body weight and overall improved quality of life.” - *Diane Hall, RD*

## EAT THESE FOODS WITH CAUTION

- ♦ Hot dogs
- ♦ Sausages
- ♦ Hamburger
- ♦ Raw vegetables
- ♦ Large pieces of fruit
- ♦ Cocktail meatballs
- ♦ Corn, peas, black beans
- ♦ Popcorn
- ♦ Chunks of meat
- ♦ Round, hard or chewy candy
- ♦ Nuts and seeds
- ♦ Cherries or other fruit with pits, seeds or skins
- ♦ Dried fruit, raisins, pineapple, coconut
- ♦ Peanut butter
- ♦ Chips

## SOME IDEAS FOR EATING RISKY FOODS

- ✓ Cut items into small pieces.
- ✓ Cut a hot dog length-wise before eating.
- ✓ Cook or mash carrots, corn and other vegetables.
- ✓ Spread peanut butter thinly or prepare mixed with jelly or pureed fruit.
- ✓ Meatballs, grapes, small sausages, and other round-formed foods should be cut into smaller pieces.

## TIPS TO MINIMIZE THE RISKS OF CHOKING

- ♦ Eat slowly.
- ♦ Don't talk while food is in your mouth.
- ♦ Chew food well.
- ♦ Pay attention and stay alert during meal time.

### Did You Know?

Swallowing problems don't always mean a change in foods they enjoy. There are foods normally pureed like mashed sweet potatoes, guacamole, and pudding parfaits, as well as many soft foods that can be mashed or finely chopped. Explore these choices with your dining service associates.