

## Modified Diets

- A modified diet is one that has been adjusted in regards to texture or content

### Examples of Modified Diets

- **Texture Modified:**
  - Pureed
  - Ground
  - Finely chopped
  - Chopped
- **Content Modified:**
  - Weight loss
  - Low fat/cholesterol
  - Low Sodium
  - Diabetic
  - High Fiber
- Orders for modified diets must be written by the physician
- The dietitians role is to make recommendations and to provide education regarding the diet

### Food Textures

- Rationale:
  - Inadequate chewing
  - Edentulous (no teeth)
  - Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Staff should be aware of why food modifications are being made.

### What is Dysphagia?

- Dysphagia is a difficulty in swallowing.
- Persons with dysphagia may have an unsafe swallow, causing food or fluid to enter the airway (aspiration).
- Dysphagia has a wide range of causes including head or neck injury, stroke, muscular dystrophies, cerebral palsy, and certain medications.

### Aspiration

- Aspiration is the action of inhaling food or liquids into the lungs.
- Aspiration may cause apparent symptoms of coughing, gagging, breathing difficulties etc.
- Aspiration can occur with no apparent symptoms, this is called silent aspiration.

## Signs of Chewing/Swallowing Problems

- Gagging or coughing while eating
- Swallowing one bite many times
- Gargly or “wet” sounding voice
- Drooling
- Food remains in mouth or throat after eating
- Breathing difficulty during eating/drinking
- Unexplained weight loss
- Inability to gain weight
- Persistent unexplained fever or temperature
- Frequent respiratory infections/pneumonia

### Possible Speech Pathologist Recommendations for Decreasing Dysphagia

- Use of adaptive eating aids (special utensils, cups or dishes)
- Specific eating procedures (small bites of food, two swallows before next bite, sips of fluid between bites of food etc.)
- Positioning or ways to sit while eating or drinking (sit upright, shoulders back, chin tucked down etc.)
- Altering food consistency
- Thickening liquids

## Description of Food Consistencies

- Pureed: Should be smooth, no lumps, yet cohesive- Resembles pudding
- Ground: Moist, soft hamburger texture
- Finely Chopped: Moist, soft, large curd cottage cheese texture (size of Cheerios)
- Chopped: Bite sized pieces (1” chunks)
- Regular: No changes needed
- Thickened Liquids: Pudding, honey or nectar consistency

### Available Thickeners

- Commercial Thickeners: Examples include Thick-It, Thick ‘n Easy, Thicken Up These can be added to hot or cold foods or beverages
- Food Thickeners: Baby rice cereal, mashed potato flakes, graham cracker crumbs, vanilla wafers (Flavors should compliment) These can be added to food only-no beverages
- Caution about excess calories-Check with Registered Dietician

## Consequences of Dysphagia

- Consequences of dysphagia can range from discomfort to choking or life threatening illness.
- Recommendations given by the speech pathologist should be followed 100% of the time-NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Not following recommendations could be putting the individual's life at risk.
- If you feel the persons swallow has improved...another swallow study is needed before recommendations are changed.