

# Aspiration Prevention

**What is aspiration?** Aspiration occurs when food, drink, or saliva gets into the lungs. Coughing or choking could be a sign of aspiration. However, aspiration can happen without any signs, this is called silent aspiration.

## What can I do to prevent aspiration in hospital?



**Always keep the head of the bed in an upright position (30-45 degrees).**



**Dangle your feet the evening after surgery.**



**While awake do deep breathing exercises.**



**Sit in chair at all mealtimes, stay up 30 minutes after all meals.**



**Walk at least 3 times a day.**



**Brush your teeth after each meal or 3 times per day.**



**If you have nausea or vomiting please let your health care team know.**

## What can I expect from my care team and family to help prevent aspiration?

- The team will remind you to do the above activities.
- Help the patient to sit in a chair at all mealtimes.
- Family members should:
  1. Be aware of aspiration prevention activities.
  2. Always ask the nurse if a patient is allowed to eat before feeding.
  3. Help patient to sit on the chair at the bedside for meals.
  4. Walk with patient each day.

**Acknowledgment:**

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