

Facilitating feeding of the elderly with swallowing and hand movement difficulty via the mouth

In the following video, we will introduce how to facilitate feeding of elderly with swallowing and hand movement difficulty via the mouth

Environment

First, we need to ensure the feeding environment has sufficient lighting, is safe, comfortable, tidy and clean.

This enables the elder to concentrate on feeding, hence minimizes the chance of choking on food. Food hygiene is also ensured.

Cutlery/utensils

There are some utensils especially designed for elderly to feed themselves.

Taking this anti-slip mat as an example, it can help prevent cups and bowls from tipping over.

Utensils with a thicker yet smaller grip can be held more easily.

A smaller spoon also allows control of the feeding portion size.

These specially designed chopsticks do not fall apart easily.

Taller, curved bowls enable elderly to eat with one hand only.

Shorter cups can prevent the elder from choking on water when they lean back to drink.

The drinking portion is also controlled.

Explaining the feeding procedure

We need to explain the feeding procedure to the elder to let them feel respected.

Also, pay attention to their feeding posture.

Mum, I've cooked some oatmeal for you. See if you like it?

I'm really tired. Can I eat it while in bed?

Mum, Speech Therapist said the feeding posture is vital to swallowing.

You must not eat while in bed.

This is to prevent you from choking and food from entering the airway.

You must be very tired from taking care of me.

I wish I could do something to help

Mum, this is just a transitional period. Once you recover, we will all be very happy.

Don't give up! Don't worry, we will take a rest when we are tired.

Now I need to listen to you.

Helping the elder get ready

First, facilitate the elder as they use the toilet, clean their mouth and wash their hands

Help the elder wear their dentures, spectacles and apron if necessary.

Help the elder sit up straight, paying attention to the height of the table. Ensure a comfortable and correct sitting posture.

If the posture is incorrect, food may be fed into the airway and cause choking

Put on the apron to keep your clothes clean

Wear your spectacles to see the food clearly

I don't need my dentures! I'm not eating anything hard...

Your dentures may be deformed easily if you don't wear them! Put them on to exercise your gums to keep them healthy!

Preparing suitable food

Wash your hands before preparing the food to ensure personal and food hygiene.

Following the doctor's instruction, prepare different meals for example diced meals and soft meals.

If there are rice, meat and vegetables, separate them before grinding this will make the elder feel happier.

For water, soup and milk, follow the doctor's instruction to add a suitable amount of thickening powder.

Pour a suitable amount of fluid into the container,

then following the doctor's instruction, add a suitable amount of thickening powder using the designated spoon into the fluid.

Pills need to be correctly grinded too.

First, prepare some butter paper and use it to wrap up different pills.

Then, grind the pills with a mortar and pestle.

One by one, put the grinded pills into water.

Take the pills together with thickened water.

Do not mix the grinded pills with your meal.

The feeding process

The elder should be fed carefully. Try to have good eye contact with the elder as they

are fed

While feeding, pay attention to the elder's physical and mental state and also their chewing and swallowing ability

Mum, there is no hurry. Please swallow your food slowly.

If you feel tired, you may take a rest first.

Mum, you need to take your medications after breakfast. I've grinded them for you already.

Thank you. Have you had your breakfast?

Mum, don't worry. I've eaten already.

Post-feeding care

Finally, we need to be aware of Post-feeding care.

After feeding, try to sit upright for half an hour. This prevents food from flowing into the airway to cause choking.

Mum, where do you want to go?

I want to have a rest in my room.

You should sit still for at least half an hour after feeding.

This helps prevent food from entering the airway and choking.

Let me record my mum's eating situation in case the doctor asks for it.

Summary

Finally, let's recap on what we've discussed on feeding

First, we need to ensure a suitable environment

Second, we need to choose appropriate utensils

Third, we need to explain the feeding procedure

Forth, we need to help the elder get ready for feeding

For example, their sitting posture and tools to facilitate them

Fifth, we need to prepare suitable food

Sixth, we need to be careful and attentive during the feeding process

Finally, post-feeding care mustn't be neglected

We hope caretakers find this video useful when

facilitating feeding of the elderly with swallowing and hand movement difficulty via the mouth

to gain sufficient nutrition, maintain good health and to prevent choking