



Safety Elements to be Observed During Feeding to Avoid Aspiration or Choking

- During feeding, baby should be in a **correct position**:
 - held at reclined position <45 degrees at 1 month
 - 45 to 90 degree angle at 3 months
 - 7+ months: sitting with seat back at 90 degrees with external support as needed.
- Baby or toddler should only be given **food that they can manage** in appropriate size portions.
- Be aware of the warning signals for **difficulty with sequence of sucking, swallowing, and breathing** during nursing, bottle drinking or cup drinking:
 - coughing or choking during or after sucking/drinking
 - recurring pneumonia or respiratory infections
 - gurgly, hoarse, or breathy voice
 - prolonged feeding time
 - excessive loss of liquid
 - pulling away from nipple
 - eyes widening and nasal flaring (looking frantic)
 - arching or stiffening of the body during feeding
- Be aware of warning signs for **low oral motor ability** such as limited jaw, lip, and tongue movement resulting in difficulty in chewing food and manipulating it within the oral cavity:
 - difficulty managing transition to Stage 3 baby food or textured table foods
 - difficulty with adequately chewing finger foods
 - prolonged feeding time
 - loss of much liquid and food
 - coughing or gagging during meal
 - stuffing mouth with food
- Be aware of warning signs for **oral sensory difficulty** :
 - stuffing mouth with food
 - tolerating only very small amounts of food in mouth at a time
 - difficulty managing transition to Stage 3 baby food
 - difficulty with adequately chewing finger foods
 - loss of much liquid or food
 - coughing or gagging during meal due to inadequately chewed food
 - food aversions or food jags
 - pocketing food in the mouth for prolonged period of time

If you have concerns about your child's feeding skills, please talk to your pediatrician and/or call to schedule an oral-motor feeding evaluation with a speech-language pathologist. Call 773.880.4441 to schedule an appointment at Children's Memorial Hospital.