

Risk Feeding

(Eating & Drinking with Acknowledged Risks, EDAR)

How carers, nurses and family can support Patients who are Risk Feeding

Risk Feeding:

When a patient continues to eat and drink despite a risk of aspiration and/or choking, this is referred to as 'Risk Feeding' or 'Feeding at Risk' or 'Eating & Drinking with Acknowledged Risks (EDAR)'.

If a Risk Feeding / EDAR decision needs to be made by the doctor/lead clinician and family, this should result in a plan which balances safety and quality of life as equally as possible, taking fully into account the patient's preferences and the cultural and religious beliefs of the individual. If the patient does not have the mental capacity to consent to Risk Feeding / EDAR, then the lead clinician should hold a *Best Interest Meeting* and document rationale for the decision.

Unsafe swallowing:

If a decision has been made for a patient to Risk Feed, then it has been acknowledged that;

- their eating, drinking and swallowing is unsafe, and is unlikely to improve;
- there is a high risk of chest infections and/or choking;
- they have declined or are not suitable for tube feeding (alternative nutrition and hydration).

How carers & nursing staff can help:

- **No need to refer the patient to SaLT if a Risk Feeding decision has already been made**, or if the Doctor decides the patient is getting closer to end of life and/or palliative care;
- Remember eating, drinking and swallowing of food & drink has been acknowledged as unsafe, so there is an accepted level of risk;
- Therefore, give food and drink that is as easy and comfortable as possible for the patient to manage, bearing in mind their preferences;
- If any specific Swallow Recommendations have been made by the Speech & Language Therapist (SaLT), follow these to try to reduce risks – if this has been possible.
- If there are no specific Swallow Recs for this patient, follow our other swallowing advice leaflets such as *Leaflet 1: Good practice supporting patients at mealtimes*; *Leaflet 3: Choking*; and *Leaflet 4: Mouth Care*.

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