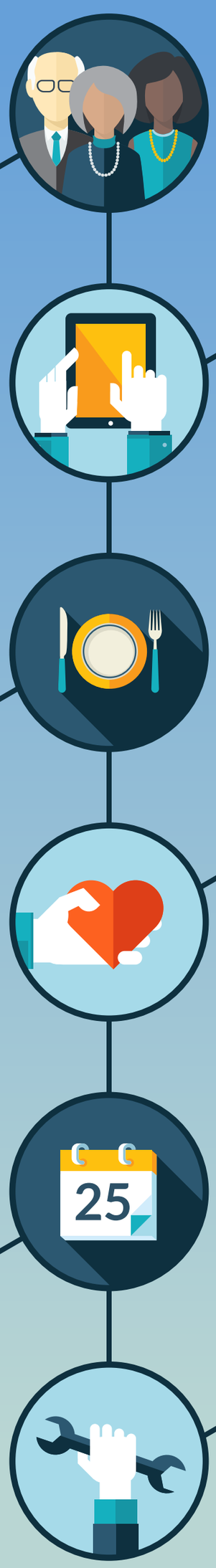
Thick-It®

DINING WITH DIGNITY™

Tips for Patients with Dysphagia

Mealtime offers multiple daily opportunities to connect with our loved ones, our culture, and our health. For people with swallowing difficulties, it can bring fear, embarrassment, and isolation. Dysphagia can diminish a patient's self-esteem, socialization, and quality of life.[1]

Here are a number of ways you can help your patient proudly take their seat at the table.



Get Social

Older adults report feeling happier eating with others. More than half say sharing a meal makes the food taste better.[2]

Seniors eat more and make better food choices in social settings.[3]

If the patient is able, encourage them to dine with other residents.

Join your loved one for a few meals each week.

Stay Engaged

Share decision-making about treatment and diet with the patient, their clinicians, and family.[4]

Let the patient weigh-in on their preferences for what, where, and when they eat.

Involve the patient in planning, purchasing, and preparing meals when possible.

Set the Stage

Create a well-lit, inviting environment without loud noises and distractions.

Use a smaller table so diners can better hear and communicate with each other.[5]

Serve the patient the same foods others are eating, modified for their swallowing abilities.[5]

Use molds and pastry bags to make food look appetizing. Keep foods separate so flavors can be enjoyed on their own.[6]

Enjoy the Experience

Take time to enjoy the meal and the company—eating quickly increases aspiration risk.[7]

Help the patient maintain their dining skills and have more autonomy over what they eat. [6]

Ask permission to assist them if they need help dining.[6]

Plan an Outing

Practice Dining with Dignity™ when eating out. Let the patient choose the restaurant and order their meal to boost self-esteem and promote saliva flow for better swallowing.[7]

Contact the restaurant in advance to alert them to the patient's special dietary requirements.[7]

Build Your Toolkit

If the patient has strength or coordination issues, adaptive utensils and dishware can empower patients to feed themselves.[8]

Help the patient maintain their dignity with a discreet, adult "bib." Cravaat® scarves offer a variety of options for women and men.[9]

Find more products and tips for Dining with Dignity™ on the Thick-It® brand's dysphagia education platform.

Visit thickit.com/education

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