



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care
a core program of PMHCC, Inc.

Dysphagia: Considerations for Risk Management

The following **key words/issues** may prompt risk management questions regarding dysphagia.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Choking | <input type="checkbox"/> Aspiration pneumonia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent treatment of pneumonia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edentulous | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent upper respiratory infections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Refusal of meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in behavior prior/during/post meals |

When there is concern regarding an incident involving dysphagia, the following **questions** may be useful.

- Does the agency have a policy/procedure regarding dysphagia?
- Does the agency have a nurse and how is he/she involved?

- Does the individual have an eating plan?
- Was the eating plan being followed?
- Were staff, involved in the incident, trained/educated regarding the individual's diagnosis/eating plan?
- Has everyone been educated regarding the plan and any changes to it?

- Has the individual seen the PCP?
- Has an evaluation (by a speech pathologist) been recommended?
- When is the evaluation scheduled?

- Has there been a change in the person's diet?
- Has there been a change in the person's dental status?
- Has there been a weight loss?
- Has there been a medication change? Are medication levels in range?
- Has there been a change in mental status?

Note: This list is not all inclusive. Other questions may be necessary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

Suggestions for **corrective action**:

- General education regarding dysphagia
- Person-specific training for staff regarding precautions, diet textures, eating plans
- Discussion with PCP for possible evaluation or re-evaluation for dysphagia
- Use of dysphagia tools located on the PCHC website –
 - ✓ *The Eating, Drinking, Swallowing Checklist*
 - ✓ *The Dysphagia Resource Directory*
 - ✓ *Tube Feeding Resource Packet*

