

Master Safe Feeding Assistance for CNA Testing

Prevent aspiration and demonstrate professional competence. With 40% of nursing home residents having dysphagia and aspiration pneumonia carrying 31% mortality rates, proper technique is life-saving.

Step 1: Initial Setup & Hand Hygiene

- Perform thorough hand hygiene at start of exam (Prometric/Headmaster requirement)
- Knock and enter room, introduce yourself professionally
- Verify resident identity using diet card (NNAAP/Headmaster mandatory)
- Greet resident by name (Prometric approach - no explicit diet card check)
- Explain procedure: "I'll help you with your meal today"
- Wash hands thoroughly - 20+ seconds with soap and warm water

Step 2: Critical Positioning & Safety Setup

- Position resident at 75-90° upright angle using pillows or bed elevation
- Sit at resident's eye level for comfortable interaction
- Position yourself on resident's stronger side if they have weakness
- Clean resident's hands with washcloth or wipes
- Offer clothing protector/bib to resident (Prometric/Headmaster requirement)
- Place meal tray where resident can clearly see all food items

Step 3: Safe Feeding Technique

- Describe available foods to resident: "You have chicken, potatoes, and green beans"
- Ask food preferences: "What would you like to try first?"
- Offer small, spoon-sized bites - never overfill spoon
- Place food on stronger side of mouth if resident has weakness
- Wait for complete swallowing before offering next bite
- Offer fluids regularly throughout meal to aid swallowing
- Maintain conversation: "How does that taste?" or "Would you like more?"

Step 4: Continuous Monitoring for Danger Signs

- Watch for coughing, gurgling voice, or throat clearing
- Check for food pocketing in cheeks or difficulty swallowing
- Monitor breathing patterns and voice changes
- Stop feeding immediately if any swallowing difficulties appear
- Never rush resident or force feeding pace

Step 5: Intake Monitoring & Documentation

- Record intake amounts within 25% accuracy (Prometric requirement)
- Document comprehensive intake and resident response (Headmaster requirement)
- Note resident's appetite and food preferences
- Observe for any changes in swallowing ability during meal
- Encourage resident to eat as much as possible safely

Step 6: Meal Completion & Post-Feeding Care

- Clean resident's mouth and hands with washcloth
- Remove clothing protector if used
- Keep resident upright for minimum 30 minutes after eating
- Place call light within resident's easy reach
- Clear tray and eating area properly
- Wash hands thoroughly after completing feeding (NNAAP after only, Headmaster start+end)

Step 7: Professional Communication & Reporting

- Maintain respectful conversation throughout entire meal
- Encourage resident: "You're doing great" or "Take your time"
- Report any swallowing difficulties to nurse immediately
- Document feeding assistance provided and resident response
- Thank resident for allowing you to help with their meal

Step 8: Test Day Performance Tips

- Focus on resident communication rather than evaluator observation
- Verbalize safety checks: "I'm making sure you're sitting up straight"
- Demonstrate patience - never rush under testing pressure
- Show continuous monitoring by commenting on resident's responses
- Remember: NO gloves needed - focus on hand hygiene excellence