

Steps for Assisting a Resident with Feeding

Follow these steps whenever you assist a resident with feeding:

1. Follow standard precautions and sanitary food handling practices by washing your hands and wearing gloves, if needed.
2. Before serving food, check to see that it is the correct tray for your resident and that the meal matches the resident's dietary requirements.
3. Introduce yourself to your resident and explain that it's time to eat. Speak slowly and clearly. Face the resident as you speak. This will improve communication.
4. Check to see that the resident is sitting in an upright (90 degree) position, assist with the clothing protector, and wash the resident's hands.
5. Encourage self-feeding whenever possible.
6. Sit at the resident's eye level and assist with buttering bread, opening cartons, or cutting meat. Check food temperatures by feeling the carton or observing for steam. Stir food to hasten cooling, but *never* blow on the food.
7. Explain what foods are on the tray and ask what the resident would like to eat first.
8. Offer small bites alternating with liquids.
9. Observe that food is chewed and swallowed before offering more.
10. Do not rush the resident during mealtime.
11. Report any swallowing difficulties to the nurse immediately.
12. Remember to talk with the resident throughout the meal.
13. When the resident is finished, remove and dispose of the clothing protector and wash the resident's face and hands.
14. Remove the food tray. Remove and return any personal items left on the tray. Follow scope of practice guidelines for recording food intake. Generally, certified nursing assistants are trained to assess and record food intake, but feeding assistants are not.
15. Leave the signal device within the resident's reach, if necessary.

Feeding assistants and nurse aides also use specific techniques to meet residents' individual needs. These methods may include explaining the positioning of food on the plate, providing adaptive equipment for those with physical limitations, and helping to guide residents' hands.