

THE FRAZIER FREE WATER PROTOCOL IMPROVES COMPLIANCE WITH MODIFIED DIETS

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Purpose:

Patients with dysphagia on thickened liquids have difficulty complying with modified diet recommendations. They are more susceptible to aspiration pneumonia, dehydration, decreased patient satisfaction, and increased administration of IV fluids. Consequently, the hospital incurs higher costs related to patients with dehydration.

The two primary goals of this evidence based practice project were to: 1) create and implement a policy and procedure for the Frazier Free Water Protocol (FFWP) for adults in the acute care setting with dysphagia on thickened liquids or NPO, 2) educate patients, caregivers and staff on the importance of oral care, the FFWP, and compliance with modified diets.

Methods:

The protocol was piloted for 6 weeks on 6 units with 15 patients to collect data and receive feedback on the protocol. Speech and Occupational therapists identified patients with dysphagia on thickened liquids or NPO. Staff and patients were educated on the FFWP. A visual alert and how to record free water intake on the FFWP Free Water Log were posted behind the patient's bed. The patients followed the protocol of sitting upright in bed greater than ninety degrees, received oral care, and were offered water in between meals.

Results:

Results of the pilot program demonstrated that patients tolerated oral care and free water without increased risk of aspiration pneumonia, and verbally expressed increased patient satisfaction via feedback to healthcare personnel. The policy and procedure was approved by the Procedure Committee, and the Practice Council. The education council will review the FFWP and full implementation will occur hospital wide.

Key words: Frazier Free Water Protocol, dysphagia, oral care