

# The Dangerous Dozen

**STAY IN THE GREEN ZONE.**

AVOID THESE 12 PRACTICES TO PROMOTE A SAFE MEALTIME EXPERIENCE.

<b>S</b>	<b><u>SLUMPING should be corrected.</u></b> Eating meals or snacks when slumped forward or to the side increases the chance the food will not go where it should when you swallow.
<b>A</b>	<b><u>ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT that is missing or wrong poses a danger.</u></b> If the person you are helping needs special dishes, cups, or utensils, it is unsafe for them to eat without their equipment.
<b>F</b>	<b><u>FURNITURE that is not supporting correct positioning is a no-no.</u></b> Should this person be seated in a specific dining chair or wheelchair while eating? If the furniture is wrong, correct positioning cannot be achieved.
<b>E</b>	<b><u>EATING LIKE A BABY BIRD can lead to aspiration.</u></b> Doing anything that causes an individual to look up when taking a bite or sip is unsafe.
<b>M</b>	<b><u>MEALTIME ORDERS that are not followed lead to unsafe eating.</u></b> It is dangerous to serve food or beverages not prepared to match the ordered texture and consistency. Food and drink should also match any prescribed diet.
<b>E</b>	<b><u>ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CHAOTIC is not suitable for mealtime.</u></b> A lot of noise and distraction in the area where meals are served creates unnecessary risk.
<b>A</b>	<b><u>ASSISTANCE WITH EATING THAT IS NOT APPROPRIATE increases risk of choking or aspiration.</u></b> Staff presenting food from a standing position or not following guidelines about where they should be sitting and level of support (e.g., 1:1) is unsafe.
<b>L</b>	<b><u>LACK OF RESPECT is a problem at any time, but is uniquely risky for meals.</u></b> Talking over or around the person you are supporting adds to mealtime danger. Besides being rude, it means your attention is not on the mealtime.
<b>T</b>	<b><u>TEMPERATURES OF FOOD being too hot or too cold when served is unsafe.</u></b> Food served at the wrong temperature can range from unappetizing to unsafe. A person who can't spit out food is at much higher risk of getting burned.
<b>I</b>	<b><u>IMPROPER SANITATION during food preparation can cause contamination.</u></b> If food is prepared, served, or stored from a surface that has not been properly sanitized (including handwashing), this is risky.
<b>M</b>	<b><u>MISHANDLING FOOD DURING STORAGE leads to risk of infection and illness.</u></b> Food not stored properly, both before preparation and when there are leftovers, increases the risk of bacteria and food-borne illness
<b>E</b>	<b><u>EXCESSIVE PACE OR AMOUNT impairs safe swallowing.</u></b> Feeding someone too quickly or with too big a bite or sip greatly increase the risk of choking.