

Challenging Scenarios for Trained Feeding Assistants

Scenario	Potential Strategies
The resident is not chewing their food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently touch the underside of the chin and verbally remind them to chew. If the resident doesn't respond and continue to hold food, notify the nurse.
The resident forgets to swallow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind the resident to swallow. • Feel the resident's cheek and chin for swallowing before offering the next bite. • Notify the nurse and/ or speech therapist to assess for swallowing problems.
The resident eats too fast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer food items separately • Use smaller utensils or cups • Set utensils down between bites
The resident eats too slow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide verbal cues • Serve the resident first (beginning of the meal) to allow more time • Use insulated dishes to assure proper food temperatures
The resident eats non-edible items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove all non-edible items from the table (i.e., paper napkins, straws, straw wrappers) • Provide finger foods
The resident is combative and throwing food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause of resident's agitation and remove if possible. • Trained Feeding Assistant should sit on resident's non-dominant side. • Provide non-breakable dishes with suction holder. • Give resident one food at a time.
The resident paces during mealtime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit beside the resident at the table when the tray is ready to be served. • Give finger foods while resident is pacing • Use rituals such as same piece of music, saying grace or singing to remind the resident to stay seated until food is served. • Give the resident something to drink immediately after the resident sits down at the table.
The resident seems paranoid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve food in closed containers • Do not mix foods together
The resident refuses to open her mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer fluids or something sweet • Notify supervisor. Resident may need to have chewing/ swallowing evaluated • Never force feed or pry open a resident's mouth when it is clamped shut. • Attempt to verbally cue the resident • Offer alternative foods or fluids • Have another staff member attempt to feed the resident
The resident forgets that he/ she has eaten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the resident a snack then report to the charge nurse