

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Quality of Life: Help Residents Who Require Enteral Nutrition Meet These Needs

**If a resident feels self-conscious, you can do this, suggests activity expert.**

Nurse attorney **Barbara Miltenberger** predicts surveyors will be taking a closer look at socialization for the person with tube feedings. "Due to culture change, there's more emphasis on quality of life," she points out.

Initially released survey guidance for tube feedings (F322), which CMS had at press time temporarily withdrawn, says that "to assure that the resident being fed by a feeding tube maintains the highest degree of quality of life possible, it is important to minimize possible social isolation or negative psychosocial impact to the degree possible (e.g., continuing to engage in appropriate activities, socializing in the dining room)." (For more information on the guidance, see page 83.)

Overcome this potential obstacle: "If a resident receiving continuous tube feedings feels self-conscious of being attached to a feeding pump while out of their room, you can ask for a routine order for 'feeding interruption time,'" says **Reta Underwood**, an activity expert and president of Consultants for Long Term Care Inc. in La Grange, Ky. "This can be done with a PRN order for a specified time frame, i.e., 'PRN disconnect feed for no more than one hour and 30 minutes to attend out of room activities.'"

At Northern Oaks Living and Rehabilitation Center, "we encourage all residents to get out of their rooms and to attend activities of their choice," says **Barbara Lohman, MSW**, social services director for the facility in Abilene, Texas. "If a resident who is tube fed wants to attend an activity, the activity director makes sure that they get to that activity," she tells Eli. "Some of our residents like to pass the time 'people watching' in our lobby."

"The activity director and social services director make room visits to those who do not like to get out of their rooms much. Room activities might include one-on-one conversational visits, reading a book to the resident, pet therapy visits, or reading their mail to them," Lohman adds.

Underwood also notes that "just because someone receives food from a tube doesn't mean that they should be isolated or excluded from food-related activities. Olfactory sensation is important to sensory satisfaction when a person loses the ability to swallow" and has to rely on tube feedings, she says.

Safety tip: Miltenberger points out that if someone isn't supposed to have anything by mouth, taking the person to the dining room to socialize could put them at risk "for taking food off someone's plate and aspirating. Your care plan and documentation need to show that you've thought about those issues," advises Miltenberger, with Husch Blackwell in Jefferson City, Mo.

Underwood stresses the importance of getting the speech language pathologist involved to make sure the resident's diet "is the least strict that it can be."

"If a patient has severe swallowing issues including choking on ice chips, etc., then ... their primary nutrition has to be the tube feedings," says **Joanna Liddell**, a speech language pathologist at Kolob Care and Rehabilitation of St. George in St. George, Utah.

"We continue to evaluate the person's swallowing and let [the team] know when it's better and when to switch to bolus feedings" and try to get the person to eat more by mouth, Liddell adds.

"If the person is getting a tube feeding because they aren't taking in enough calories, then you want them to eat more by mouth in addition to the tube feedings to get an adequate caloric intake," says Liddell. "When they are ready, we

switch them to bolus feedings, which helps their stomach to prepare for regular-sized meals again. We may shut off the continuous feeding at night to allow them to feel hungry for breakfast."

Tasty tip: Flavored lip-gloss comes in "most soda, fruit, chocolate and other candy flavor," says Underwood, who reports she's even found a buttered popcorn flavored lip-gloss. "In addition to the benefits of the taste, the lip-gloss conditions the lips," she adds.

Resource: See the excerpt from the RAI User's Manual Care Area Assessment Resource for Feeding Tube(s) on page 83.