Aspiration pneumonia is a type of pneumonia caused by the infiltration of something other than air, such as food, saliva or other substances into the lungs. The condition is typically caused by bacteria that normally reside in the mouth or nasal passages.

Risk Factors

- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) can come from aging, many disorders, illnesses or damage
- Tube feeding
- Poor oral health & care
- Weakened immune system
- Alcoholism
- Frailty

Symptoms

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- Bluish skin color (cyanosis) indicates worsening condition – escalate immediately
- Cough, sometimes with yellow or green sputum
- Difficulty swallowing
- **Fatique**
- Fever
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)
- Chest pain
- Halitosis (bad breath)
- Sweating
- Low oxygen levels

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ASPIRATION PNEUMONIA

Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Fatigue Fever

Low oxygen levels Sweating Chest pain Halitosis (bad breath)

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Diagnosis

- Difficulty breathing and fever after an aspiration event are common early warning signs
- Chest X-ray
- Blood test white blood count (WBC) is typically elevated
- Sputum and blood cultures may be obtained in some settings (sputum may be contaminated by mouth germs)

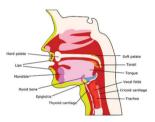
Treatment

- Swallowing evaluation/Speech therapy consult
- Antibiotics: may last 1-2 weeks
- Some people may choose palliative care

Prevention (3 Rs)

Raise the head of bed to an angle of 30 to 45 degrees (especially while eating or drinking). **Remind** to chew slowly and completely before swallowing.

Routine oral care-at least daily.



swallowing is complex



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