SUBJECT: Aspiration Precautions

HOSPITAL DEPARTMENT: Multidisciplinary

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide a reference for staff in caring for inpatients that are at risk for aspiration and its complications of aspiration pneumonitis and aspiration pneumonia.

POLICY: All licensed and unlicensed personnel caring for inpatients must be informed if a patient is at risk for aspiration and its complications. Personnel will be instructed in and take appropriate precautions.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Aspiration: misdirection of foreign materials (oropharyngeal bacteria, food, liquids, or regurgitated gastric contents) into the larynx and lower respiratory tract (1).

2. Aspiration pneumonitis: acute chemical lung injury due to this aspiration (1).

3. Aspiration pneumonia: when oropharyngeal or gastric contents that have been colonized with pathogenic bacteria are aspirated into the lower respiratory tract (1).

PROCEDURE: This policy will direct staff to the clinical guideline that is used to minimize the risk of aspiration and its sequelae in our patients. See Appendix 1 for these guidelines.

AUTHORIZATION:

___________________________________  Title  _____________________________________  Date

___________________________________  Title  _____________________________________  Date
References for policy and clinical guidelines:


