

Policy Name:

Diet Order Management Privileges for the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

Purpose:

To give the discipline of Speech-Language Pathology privileges to adjust a patient's diet orders and swallow strategies to ensure safe swallowing.

Policy:

Each patient must have a diet ordered by a Physician, PA, or NP (will use the term physician in this document to mean all three). Diets may then be adjusted by the Speech-Language Pathologist in accordance with stated procedures. The Speech-Language Pathologist may make these diet modifications per clinical findings and in collaboration with the patient, family and team. Clinical findings will be reported in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) within the documents of: Clinical Bedside Swallow Evaluation, Modified Barium Swallow Study, and Speech Daily Treatment notes (which may be re-evaluations). SLP student interns may document in EMR, but they will not have diet management privileges or enter an SLP plan of care order.

Procedures:

1. Physician enters initial diet order on admission. All diet orders and changes are entered via the Computer Physician Order Entry system (CPOE).
2. Subsequent diet order changes may be made at the discretion of the physician.
3. Upon evaluation or re-evaluation of a patient, the Speech-Language Pathologist may adjust diet orders via a Speech/Swallow Plan of Care and in CPOE in the following scenarios:
 - a. Downgrade a diet consistency (liquids and/or solids). E-signature by physician is required. (i.e., changing diet from Regular consistency to Dysphagia Ground).
 - b. Upgrades a diet consistency (liquids and/or solids). E-signature by physician is required. (i.e., changing from Dysphagia Puree and Honey thick liquids to a Dysphagia Ground and Nectar thick liquids).
 - c. Modifications in the delivery of the solids, liquids, or medications to ensure safe swallowing strategies. E-signature by physician is required. (i.e., Changing diet from Dysphagia Advanced with thin liquids to Dysphagia Advanced with thin liquids, but utilizing a small sip by cup with chin tuck and crushing the medications in applesauce).
4. Diet advancement off of NPO requires an order directly from the physician.
5. Diet upgrades or downgrades will not progress off of "Clear liquids only" (to a full liquid or Solid consistencies) or onto "Clear liquids only", as the "Clear liquids only" diet needs to be ordered or discontinued directly by a physician. However, the SLP may modify the "Clear liquid" diet with the liquid consistencies of "Thin, Nectar, or Honey thick" to reduce aspiration risk.
6. Changing a patient from a PO diet to an NPO diet also requires an order directly from the physician.
7. The Speech-Language Pathologist cannot directly order NPO or take a patient off NPO. However, the Speech-Language Pathologist may make the recommendations to do so in the Speech/Swallow Plan of Care.

Note: SLP diet order changes take effect immediately. The e-signatures by the physician act as co-signing or confirmation. SLP orders should be co-signed within 24 hours.