

## **SWALLOWING AND CHEWING DIFFICULTIES (12/8/04 E-Mail)**

Recent incidents warrant a notice to facilities regarding the care of residents with special needs diets. We ask facilities to assess resident needs and update resident diet cards to assure that all residents receive food prepared in the appropriate form. We also request that delivery systems be analyzed and procedures be reviewed to ensure dietary instructions are clearly indicated and followed by caregivers and those who assist residents with their meals. The facility should monitor this process to ensure that residents' meals are delivered appropriately, that residents receive their food in proper form; and that the facility fashions a method to address the needs of residents who require assistance with meals or who require supervision while dining. A marker on an ID bracelet is a good backup to alert a caregiver that a resident has special dietary needs and should alert the caregiver to an inconsistency between a meal served and the type of meal that should be served.

The upcoming holidays present additional risks for swallowing and chewing difficulties, as well as potential choking risks, as facilities host holiday parties and families share the holiday celebration and traditions with their loved one. We ask that you review with families and guests your facility's policy on bringing food to residents with special or restricted diets and that staff be in-serviced on emergency procedures for choking and reaction to food allergies.