



Nightingale University

Frazier Water Protocol

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What is the Frazier Water Protocol?

A water protocol which allows patients who are NPO or on thickened liquid diets have water under certain rules/conditions.

History of the Protocol

1. Developed at Frazier Rehabilitation Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky in 1984 when family and patient non-compliance with thin liquid restrictions became concerning.
2. Kathy Panther, Speech Language Pathologist, worked closely with pulmonologists to study and implement the Frazier Water Protocol.
3. The study and protocol dramatically changed dysphagia treatment and is now increasing in implementation across the United States.

Key Features of the Frazier Water Protocol

***Safety of Water
Hydration
Compliance***

Is Water safe?

1. Human body is 60% water.
2. Unlike all other liquids, water is pH neutral. Clean water only—excludes flavored water, sprite, etc.
3. Small amounts of water taken into the lungs are absorbed by the aveoli back into the bloodstream.
4. Water provides a safe way to assess patients on thin liquids.
5. Swallowing compensations can be practiced with thin liquid.

The importance of Hydration

1. FWP increases hydration significantly.
2. Post discharge surveys indicate water is often primary source of nutrition.
3. The risk of IV fluids decreases.

Compliance

1. Prior to FWP implementation in 1984, patients frequently complained of thirst. Water is thirst quenching.
2. Many patients/families refuse thick liquids. When water is an option, patients are more compliant with thick liquid orders.
3. Thickening agents can be costly to patients as thickening agents are not covered by insurance.
4. When at home, patients often find the thickening procedure overwhelming and can contribute to non-compliance.
5. Many patients refuse thickened liquids due to taste or texture.

The Protocol Rules

1. Patients must be assessed by the SLP to determine if appropriate for the Frazier Water Protocol.
2. The SLP must obtain a physician's order for the Frazier Water Protocol .
3. Per the Protocol, patients who are NPO or on a Dysphagic diet may have water.

The Protocol

1. Patients who are NPO may have ice chips/water anytime after oral care is completed.
2. Patients on thickened liquid diets may have ice chips/water after oral care up until meal time. At meal time the patient consumes thick liquids. Oral care is completed and after 30 minutes patient may have ice chips/ water again.
3. MEDICATIONS ARE GIVEN ONLY WITH THICK LIQUIDS OR CRUSHED IN PUREE.
4. MEDICATIONS ARE NEVER GIVEN WITH WATER.

Indications

1. Patient must be alert and stable
2. Strict oral care must be in place.
3. Supportive family/caregiver

Contraindications

1. Poor oral hygiene: thrush, tooth decay, open sores
2. Adverse respiratory reaction to water: increased RR, SOB, Increased HR, decreased oxygen saturation, “super coughing”, increased secretions.

Education

1. Patients, family, staff and caregiver education HAS to be strong. As not following the protocol correctly could result in serious medical complications for the patient.