



The Frazier Water Protocol

Claudine Mauriello MPH, RD
Regional Dietitian

Twenty two years ago, Kathy Panther MS, CCC-SLP, after widespread non compliance with thickened liquids, developed the Frazier Water Protocol (1). This protocol encourages drinking water in between meal and using thickened liquids only with meals (1, 2). For patients with dysphasia drinking thin liquids has been an issue because of concerns about aspiration pneumonia. Drinking thickened liquids is not popular with a lot of patients and this can contribute to hydration issues. The Frazier Water Protocol may help increase compliance and hydration among these patients (1). In the June issue of the *ADVANCE for Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologist*, Kathy Panther MS, CCC-SLP and Tom Franceshini MS, CCC-SLP were interviewed about the Protocol.

A thorough swallowing evaluation, or modified barium swallow, and monitoring of cough are done prior to the initiation of the protocol (1). Patients are trialed with water to see if they can tolerate it (1). A patient with severe coughing may not be able to participate (2). On the protocol, water is the only thin liquid allowed in between meals (1). If the patient is deemed a candidate they will wear a special bracelet or other identifying feature letting the staff know to suggest water (1). The Protocol states that thickened liquids are to be taken with the oral diet only and free water is allowed 30 minutes after a meal and when not eating (1). Medications are to be given with applesauce or pudding, but not water (1, 2). It is advised that nursing do an oral check prior to drinking water after a meal (1). If the patient needs it, they are taught swallowing strategies and are told to use them when drinking water (1). The speech therapist monitors the residents for any signs of difficulty (1). Some speech therapists have implemented good oral hygiene programs along with the Protocol (1). The Frazier Water Protocol seems to reduce the occurrence of aspiration pneumonia (1). Water is the only thin liquid allowed because it has a neutral PH and is reabsorbed into the body if a problem does occur (1).

According Tom Franceschini, one of the key components of the Protocol is that a well hydrated resident is more likely to comply with thickened liquids (1). Patients often report that thickened liquids don't help with thirst; water helps most with this which also helps with hydration (2). Some families may object to thickened liquids and for patients that need it at home, they can be expensive and families may be unable to prepare them appropriately 100% of the time (2). To provide thickened liquids only with meals gives all of these patients an opportunity to drink water during the day, which can be a significant part of hydration (1,2).

At St Anne's Villa in New Jersey, the Frazier Water Protocol is done on a case by case basis according to Stacey Simon MS, CCC-SLP "We have a couple of residents on it and those that are on it seem to drink more throughout the day" she states. Dietitians should discuss it with the speech therapist at their facilities to see if anyone could benefit from it. Since dehydration is a problem among the elderly, it many help some of our dysphagia patients combat it.

References:

(1) Mosheim, J (2006) Frazier Water Protocol: Promote free water. good oral hygiene *ADVANCE for Speech-Language Pathologist & Audiologists* (16) 24: 7-8. 16

(2) Dysphagia Listserve
<http://list.dysphagia.com/dysphagia/1999-July/msg00138.html>

