

# FREE WATER PROTOCOL (SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY)

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Why should I follow the Free Water Protocol?

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## Free Water Protocol (Speech Language Pathology)

### Why should I follow the Free Water Protocol?

- Water has a neutral pH, whereas other thin fluids such as coffee, tea, milk or juice do not. Water is therefore the safest fluid for the lungs to naturally absorb if it accidentally “goes the wrong way” during swallowing.
- It will help keep your body hydrated and make you less thirsty.
- Your mouth will feel less dry and your secretions will become thinner.

### What are the rules of the Free Water Protocol?

- Dysphagia patients on thickened fluids or nothing per mouth (NPO) are allowed water between meals.
- You may drink water after brushing or swabbing your teeth until you take your first bite of food.
- No water is allowed during meals or for 30 minutes after meals. You can drink as much water as desired throughout the day, as long as the rules are followed.
- Consumption of other thin fluids is not permitted.
- Swallowing rules and strategies should be adhered to as recommended by your Speech and Language Pathologist.

### Can I take my tablets and pills with water?

- Pills are never given with water for patients following the Free Water Protocol.

### Is there any other information I should know?

- Make sure to thoroughly clean your mouth before taking sips of water in the morning and after each meal.

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