Syringe Feeding to Increase Nutritional Intake

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DIAGNOSIS: DOWN SYNDROME
AGE: 0;10 (10 months, 16 days)

CURRENT FUNCTIONING PRIOR TO FEEDING THERAPY:
Child is breastfed; but will not use a bottle or cup with a straw. Mother is unable to leave child for long periods of time due to this. Pediatrician is also concerned about his weight flat lining.
An informal oral assessment was performed. The child’s oral musculature appears to be within normal range. Moderate tongue thrusting was observed.

Mother reported that child had feeding difficulties when he was first born, but is now able to breastfeed without complications. When presented with a bottle, child would refuse to eat. Mother also reported that child has tendency to gag when given pureed food.
Feeding Therapy

- Initially began therapy by improving strength of oral musculature and decreasing oral hypersensitivity through lingual-labial exercises (oral motor).

- In order to decrease the gag reflex, the child was introduced to pureed food to reduce his sensitivity to different textures.

- After two weeks, child showed results of decreased gag reflex and increase consumption of pureed foods with minimal difficulties.
After initial feeding therapy activities showed positive data, syringe feeding was introduced.

**Materials Used:**

- 20mL oral syringe
- 6” Sampling Straw for Oral/Enteral Syringes
Syringe Feeding Procedure

- First, appropriately position child to decrease chance of aspiration.
  - Second, place straw onto the tip of the syringe. Fill syringe with the formula mixture*.
  - Third, place straw on top of thumb (nail side down). Position thumb inside of oral cavity holding the straw against the hard palate.
  - Then, slowly push syringe allowing formula to enter into child’s mouth. Child should begin to appropriately suck the thumb and consume the formula.
  - Observe child’s suck/swallow patterns to ensure appropriate consumption of formula. Watch child’s body language and continue feeding as warranted. Refill syringe and begin procedure again as needed.

*A well-blended mixture of formula and fresh strawberries was used.
Syringe Feeding Continued

- Continue use of syringe feeding as many times as possible per day to increase sucking ability to simulate a bottle and/or straw.

- After 2-4 weeks of syringe feeding and positive data has been collected, proceed to using a thicker straw without a syringe (i.e. Honeybear bottle with straw). A sippy cup with a straw can be used as well.

Honey Bear w/ Flex Straw - TalkTools®

Playtex Baby First Lil' Gripper Twist 'n Click Straw Trainer Cup, 7 Ounce,
I would like to thank...

- The family for allowing me to present their child’s information.

- Tony Lair from NeoMed for supplying the syringes and straws when no one else would.