

Aspiration Pneumonia: Hospital Did Not Check Dietary Orders.

An elderly nursing-home resident was found non-responsive and not breathing in her room at the hospital where she had gone from the nursing home for minor elective shoulder surgery.

She was taken to the hospital ICU, was intubated and a large volume of stomach contents was suctioned from her lungs before she died.

Hospital Did Not Check Dietary Orders at the Nursing Home

The Court of Appeals of Texas linked her death to failure by the hospital medical and nursing staff to check with the nursing staff at the nursing home to see if she had any special dietary orders.

In this case the patient had been on a mechanical diet in the nursing home. Due to poor dental health and trouble chewing and swallowing, for which she was competently assessed in the nursing home, all of her solid food had to be pureed.

No Dietary Consult in the Hospital

Alternatively, the medical and nursing staff at the hospital could have thought to get an assessment of the patient's dietary needs at some time before she was advanced beyond the liquids she was given in post-anesthesia recovery, rather than just assuming a regular hospital diet was appropriate for her, the court pointed out. **Palafox v. Silvey**, __ S.W. 3d __, 2007 WL 3225512 (Tex. App., November 1, 2007).