

Aspiration Pneumonia and Pneumonitis

TABLE 1. CONTRASTING FEATURES OF ASPIRATION PNEUMONITIS AND ASPIRATION PNEUMONIA.

FEATURE	ASPIRATION PNEUMONITIS	ASPIRATION PNEUMONIA
Mechanism	Aspiration of sterile gastric contents	Aspiration of colonized oropharyngeal material
Pathophysiologic process	Acute lung injury from acidic and particulate gastric material	Acute pulmonary inflammatory response to bacteria and bacterial products
Bacteriologic findings	Initially sterile, with subsequent bacterial infection possible	Gram-positive cocci, gram-negative rods, and (rarely) anaerobic bacteria
Chief predisposing factors	Markedly depressed level of consciousness	Dysphagia and gastric dysmotility
Age group affected	Any age group, but usually young persons	Usually elderly persons
Aspiration event	May be witnessed	Usually not witnessed
Typical presentation	Patient with a history of a depressed level of consciousness in whom a pulmonary infiltrate and respiratory symptoms develop	Institutionalized patient with dysphagia in whom clinical features of pneumonia and an infiltrate in a dependent bronchopulmonary segment develop
Clinical features	No symptoms or symptoms ranging from a non-productive cough to tachypnea, bronchospasm, bloody or frothy sputum, and respiratory distress 2 to 5 hours after aspiration	Tachypnea, cough, and signs of pneumonia