Standards for
Decision Making Capacity
Appelbaum & Grisso, NEJM 319:1635-1638, Dec 22, 1988

1. Ability to communicate a choice
   Unimpaired level of consciousness,
   willingness to express a choice,
   reasonable stability of choice

2. Ability to understand (and retain)
   relevant information
   Patient can recapitulate: current
   condition, plans being discussed,
   potential consequences of the various
   options

3. Ability to appreciate the situation and
   consequences of a decision for oneself
   Patient acknowledges illness (when
   present) & general probabilities of
   risks and benefits as they apply to
   him or herself

4. Ability to manipulate information
   rationally
   Patient reaches conclusions that are
   logically consistent with the starting
   premises
Key information to provide for decision making:
1. Medical condition and prognosis
2. Recommended intervention & alternatives
3. Risks and benefits of each option
4. Consequences of decision

**Tube Feeding in Advanced Dementia**

Dementia Does Not:
1. Decrease risk for aspiration
2. Prolong survival
3. Promote wound healing
4. Increase comfort

Useful references on tube feeding:


