



DYSPHAGIA HANDOUTS

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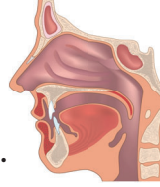
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WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

Dysphagia is a swallowing disorder.

- Individuals may have trouble swallowing...
Food, liquids, and/or saliva
- Dysphagia has many causes and may be...
Temporary or permanent



Types of Dysphagia

ORAL	OROPHARYNGEAL	ESOPHAGEAL
May have difficulty chewing &/or transporting food down to the throat.	May have difficulty initiating the swallow &/or clearing the throat.	May have difficulty passing food through esophagus & into stomach.

Treatment and Management

Speech-Language Pathologists evaluate and treat swallowing disorders. Treatment will vary based on the type of dysphagia, signs and symptoms, etiology, medical history, cognitive function of the individual, as well as other factors. Dysphagia therapy may include: diet modifications, therapeutic exercise, and/or compensatory strategies.

Dysphagia may lead to serious medical conditions such as: malnutrition, dehydration, weight loss, poor appetite, aspiration pneumonia, choking, and/or death.



JUNE IS **DYSPHAGIA AWARENESS** MONTH

COMMON CAUSES



OF DYSPHAGIA

- ▶ **Neurological**
(E.g., Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury, Parkinson's Disease, Dementia, etc.)
- ▶ **Respiratory**
(E.g., Pneumonia, COPD, etc.)
- ▶ **Cancer**
(E.g., Head/Neck, Chemotherapy, etc.)
- ▶ **Gastrointestinal**
(E.g., Reflux Disease, GERD, Blockage, etc.)
- ▶ **Acute Infections**
(E.g., Sepsis, Urinary Tract Infections, Encephalopathy, etc.)



DYSPHAGIA

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Food or liquid spillage from mouth, lips, and/or nose
- ▶ Coughing before, during, and/or after swallowing
- ▶ Persistent throat clearing during meals
- ▶ Food residuals that remain on tongue
- ▶ Shortness of breath during chewing or swallowing
- ▶ Difficulty and/or excessive chewing
- ▶ Pain or discomfort when swallowing
- ▶ Pocketing food/residuals remaining in cheeks
- ▶ Wet vocal quality during and/or after eating/drinking
- ▶ Avoidance of food, poor appetite, and/or unexplained weight loss



What is Aspiration?

Aspiration is when food, liquid, saliva, and /or other particles enter the airway. Aspiration may develop into a serious medical condition called aspiration pneumonia. Individuals with oropharyngeal dysphagia are typically at a higher risk of developing aspiration pneumonia.

What is Silent Aspiration?

Some people who aspirate do not have visible symptoms. These individuals may or may not be aware of deficits. Objective testing, such as an X-ray of the swallow, may be warranted to identify presence of silent aspiration.

If you or your loved one is experiencing trouble swallowing contact your physician or seek emergency medical assistance.



JUNE IS **DYSPHAGIA AWARENESS** MONTH



DYSPHAGIA AND ORAL CARE

Keep the oral cavity clean!

- ★ Reduces risk of bacteria, pneumonia, and other conditions
- ★ Individuals with dysphagia are at a higher risk for poor oral hygiene



General Oral Care Guidelines

- Sit upright or stand during oral care
- Remove remaining food particles
- Use toothbrush whenever possible
- Brush teeth, tongue, and gums
- Rinse mouth with water
- Repeat frequently and as needed

Individuals with Dentures

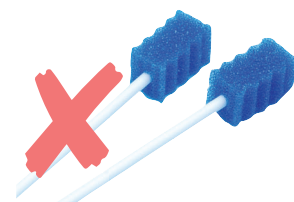
- Use soft brush to clean
- Brush & rinse dentures
- Soak dentures in disinfectant

Mouth care especially important for individuals who are NPO!

Xerostomia: medical term for dry mouth

Use a toothbrush instead of a toothette!

If individual is unable to use a regular toothbrush, other alternatives may be used. Contact a Speech Pathologist or Dentist for more assistance.



SAFE SWALLOWING



Signs & Symptoms



Guidelines



Swallow Strategies



Oral Care

Signs & Symptoms

- Coughing during/after meals
- Difficulty chewing
- Spitting out food/drink
- Throat clearing during meals
- Wet vocal quality when eating
- Loss of food/liquid from mouth
- Shortness of breath during meals
- Pocketing of food in cheeks
- Residuals remaining in mouth



Make sure individual is **ALERT** enough to eat or drink

Safe Swallow Strategies

- Sit upright as much as tolerated
- Take small bites and/or sips
- Oral care before and after meals
- Take one bite and/or sip at a time
- If individual begins to cough, wait for them to stop coughing before another bite or sip
- If individual is choking or appears short of breath, **get help immediately**

Consult with a Speech Language Pathologist to determine individualized swallow strategies

Oral Care

- At least once per day
- Essential for those with dysphagia
- Use a toothbrush
- Clean teeth, tongue, and around mouth
- Even elders with dentures should brush gums & clean dentures 2+ times per day

Modifying Diets

May help reduce signs & symptoms

Modified Diets

Thickened Liquids

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Mechanical/Chopped | • Nectar/Mildly Thick |
| • Ground/Minced | • Honey/Moderately Thick |
| • Pureed/Smooth | • Pudding/Extremely Thick |

Feeding Guidelines

- Make sure correct meal was provided
- Use verbal instructions even if resident non-verbal
- Reposition resident to be upright
- Feed resident sitting down at eye level
- Reduce distractions in environment
- Fill spoon about halfway with food
- Make sure each bite is swallowed
- Monitor for signs/symptoms of dysphagia

