



ST. ANDREW'S
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

IN ADULTS



What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is when a person has difficulty chewing or swallowing. They may have difficulties in eating and drinking, and in severe cases, may not be able to manage their saliva.

This can occur after an acute event, such as stroke and traumatic brain injury, or in some degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease and dementia.



Possible complications of dysphagia

- Choking (blocked airway)
- Aspiration pneumonia (lung infection from repeated entry of foreign matter into the airway)
- Malnutrition or dehydration due to eating and drinking less

Signs of swallowing difficulties



Coughing when eating or drinking



Choking

Food or drink residue in mouth or spilling out



Sensation of food "stuck" in throat



Refusing to eat certain food items



Sudden new onset of drooling

Persistent low grade fever with no other cause

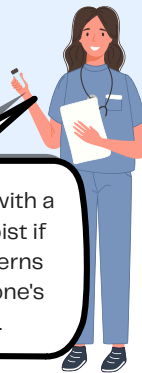


Unexplained weight loss



Frequent recurrence of lung infections

Please consult with a Speech Therapist if you have concerns about a loved one's swallowing.



Management of dysphagia

A Speech Therapist can assess and advise a person with dysphagia how to best manage their condition to enjoy their meals safely.

These may include (if suitable):



Modified diet
consistencies

Modified fluids
consistencies



Rehabilitation
exercises



Modified mode
of feeding

Safe
feeding
strategies



Compensatory
manoeuvres for safer
swallowing

A normal ageing swallow

Most of us will experience some symptoms of dysphagia as a **normal** part of ageing.

Some of these symptoms may include:



Taking a longer
time to chew



Preferring
softer foods



Eating smaller
amounts



Longer meal
times



Slower
eating speed



Preferring
warm drinks



Slower
digestion

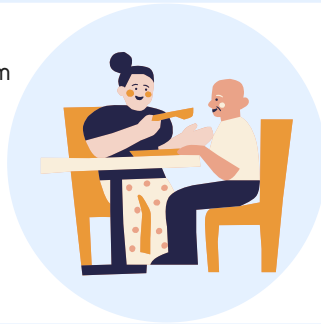
Safe feeding strategies

(Please consult your Speech Therapist for specific guidelines tailored to your loved one.)

Set up before feeding

Create a quiet, calm environment.

Prepare the correct consistency of food and drink.



Sit up with good support.

Ensure the person wants to eat.

During feeding



Do not over-load the spoon.
If each spoonful requires more than two swallows, the amount may be too large.



Limit each meal to 30 minutes to avoid fatigue.



Ensure the mouth has minimal residue before giving the next spoonful.



Stop feeding if the person is coughing. Let them rest and recover. If coughing persists, seek out a doctor or speech therapist.

After feeding

Remain seated for at least 30 minutes to promote digestion and reduce gastric reflux.



Clean mouth and wash dentures (if applicable).

MODIFIED FLUIDS

(Thickener amounts listed are ONLY for Nestle Resource ThickenUp Clear)

- ▲ IDDSI L0 (Thin Fluids) - No thickener required
- ▲ IDDSI L1 (Slightly Thick) - 1 scoop : 200 mls
- ▲ IDDSI L2 (Mildly Thick) - 2 scoops : 200 mls
- ▲ IDDSI L3 (Moderately Thick) - 4 scoops : 200 mls
- ▲ IDDSI L4 (Extremely Thick) - 6 scoops : 200 mls

Scan to learn how to prepare thickened fluids



MODIFIED DIET

- ▲ IDDSI Level 3 (Liquidised Diet)
 - Runny, sooth texture with no lumps
 - Can be drunk from a cup, large straw, or spoon
- ▲ IDDSI Level 4 (Pureed Diet)
 - Thick, smooth texture with no lumps
 - Can be eaten with a spoon or a fork
 - No chewing required
- ▲ IDDSI Level 5 (Minced Moist Diet)
 - No larger than 4x4mm wide and 15mm long
 - Can easily pass through the tines of a fork, and easily squashed
 - Needs minimal chewing
 - No visible separation of liquid
- ▲ IDDSI Level 6 (Soft & Bite-sized Diet)
 - No larger than 15x15mm wide and 15mm long, roughly the width of a standard dinner fork
 - Soft enough to be easily squashed or cut with a metal spoon/fork
 - Some chewing required
- ▲ IDDSI Level 7EC (Easy to Chew Diet)
 - Soft enough to be easily cut with the side of a metal spoon/fork
- ▲ IDDSI Level 7RG (Regular Diet)
 - No restrictions

