

Dysphagia

What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is the name used to describe problems with chewing and swallowing.

What causes dysphagia?

- stroke
- Parkinson's disease
- brain tumours
- dementia
- breathing problems
- cancer of the mouth or throat
- general weakness
- normal ageing

Signs of swallowing difficulties

- difficulty chewing solid foods
- food or drinks spilling from the mouth
- food or drinks coming down the nose
- food or drinks getting stuck in the throat

- coughing or choking on food and drink
- a wet or ‘gurgly’ sounding voice after eating or drinking
- regular chest infections

A speech pathologist can

- look for problems with chewing and swallowing
- show you what food and drink is safest for you
- give you special food or drinks that are easier to swallow
- give you tips and exercises to help you swallow safely

Tips for you

- be alert and able to concentrate during meals
- remove distractions – turn off the TV or radio
- do not talk and eat at the same time
- sit straight in the bed or chair – use pillows if needed
- wear your dentures and use denture grip if they are loose
- take your time when eating and drinking

Useful websites

Speech Pathology Australia: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/all-latest-news/1170-swallow-a-documentary

Talk to your speech pathologist for more information.

