

# Dysphagia in Adults

Allied Healthcare Professionals  
Adult Speech and Language Therapy

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

# Introduction

This leaflet is for adults who have been referred to the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Speech and Language Therapy service. Speech and language therapists are experts in the assessment and treatment of swallowing (dysphagia). You have been referred to Speech and Language Therapy because you have had some difficulties swallowing.

The aim of this leaflet is to explain about dysphagia, its symptoms and treatment.

## What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is a medical condition where a person has difficulty swallowing. Some people have difficulty with just food or just drinks, some people cannot swallow at all. Dysphagia can happen at any stage of life, but is more common in older adults.

Signs of dysphagia (you may not have all of the following):

- Coughing or choking when eating or drinking
- Bringing food back up, sometimes through the nose
- Feeling that food is stuck in your throat or chest
- A gurgly, wet-sounding voice when eating or drinking
- Too much saliva that cannot be swallowed
- Chewing that takes a long time, which could make you tired
- Changes to your voice, which may sound different from usual
- Unintentional weight loss
- Lots of chest infections

# What are the causes of dysphagia?

Dysphagia can be caused by conditions that weaken or damage the muscles and nerves used for swallowing.

# What is the treatment for dysphagia?

A speech and language therapist will assess your swallowing and give advice on:

- Dietary changes: Changing the texture of diet and liquids in line with International Diet Descriptors Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) levels so that they are safer and, or, easier to swallow. Textures are described using the IDDSI Level. This helps everyone describe food and fluid textures in the same way
- Swallowing therapy: exercises and techniques to help improve swallowing
- Your doctor may prescribe drugs to manage some conditions, for example reflux

# How can I manage dysphagia?

- If you have been seen by Speech and Language Therapy, make sure you follow the texture recommendations
- Make sure you are sitting upright, are awake and ready to eat
- Make sure you eat slowly, taking your time to chew food completely before swallowing
- Make sure you do not talk while eating, and limit distractions such as putting away phones, turning off the TV enabling you to focus on eating.

# How do I get in touch?

## **Speech and Language Therapy Service**

The Gem Centre

Neachells Lane

Wednesfield

Wolverhampton

WV11 3PG

Telephone: 01902 444363 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

E-mail: [rwh-tr.Speech-And-Language@nhs.net](mailto:rwh-tr.Speech-And-Language@nhs.net)

## **English**

**If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.**

**If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.**

## **Lithuanian**

**Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.**

**Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.**

## **Polish**

**Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.**

**Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.**

## **Punjabi**

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਢੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਢੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## **Romanian**

**Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.**

**Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.**

## **Traditional Chinese**

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。

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