



Swallowing & Dysphagia Quick Tips

What to Watch for

Several things can indicate someone is having difficulty swallowing:

- Difficulty chewing
- Pocketing food in cheeks or under tongue
- Slow or uncoordinated swallowing
- Coughing, choking, drooling or change in voice quality



Meal Time

To promote safe eating and swallowing:

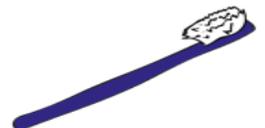
- Have people sitting upright at meals and for 30 minutes after eating
- Encourage people to eat slowly and feed themselves when able
- Ensure the mouth is clear before offering more food
- Ensure they receive the recommended diet and texture



Oral Care

Good oral hygiene is essential to comfort and good health

- Be sure to assist with oral hygiene care, ensuring mouth is clear of food after meals
- Teeth should be brushed 2x per day
- Ensure dentures are well fitting



Monitor & Report

Careful monitoring is important as swallowing ability can change over time, affecting a person's ability to manage food and drink safely

- Report any changes, difficulties or concerns to the Care Team



Swallowing / Dysphagia Key Messages



This resource is a supplement to a short educational video that can be found at www.swostroke.ca

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- A stroke can damage the part of the brain that controls the muscles used to chew and swallow. This can make eating and drinking unsafe.
- Dysphagia is one of the most common consequences of a stroke affecting as many as 55% of acute stroke survivors.
- Dysphagia is strongly associated with aspiration pneumonia, a chest infection caused by the entry of substances or bacteria into the lungs.
- Stroke Survivors may avoid eating and drinking, especially in groups, which could lead to social isolation, malnutrition and dehydration.
- The stroke survivor's care plan should include information about the appropriate diet, textures, and strategies for feeding safely.
- Best practice guidelines recommend stroke survivors with dysphagia receive regular reassessment to capture changes that may occur over time.
- The stroke survivor and their family should receive information about the risk factors, management and potential negative outcomes to help them make decisions about diet and nutritional issues.

For more information, resources or further educational opportunities go to the Southwestern Ontario Stroke Network at www.swostroke.ca