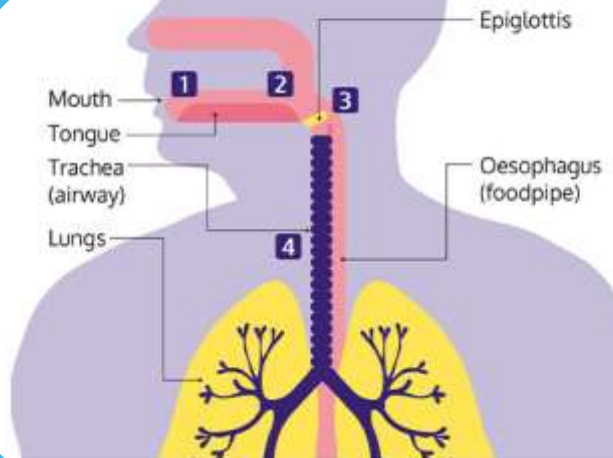


Dysphagia

Swallowing difficulties





What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is a difficulty in swallowing food, drink or saliva.

If you have this difficulty, you may need:

- Different food
- Thicker drinks
- Or no food and drink

This is to make you safer when you eat and drink.

Dysphagia can be caused by lots of things.

Some of these are:



Stroke can cause dysphagia



Head injury can cause dysphagia





Dementia can cause dysphagia

Signs of a problem with swallowing







Swallowing problems can look like this:

 <p>Coughing</p>	 <p>Chest infections</p>
 <p>Choking on food</p>	 <p>Being short of breath</p>

What does this mean?

 <p>Aspiration is when food and drink go into your airway</p>
 <p>This can cause an infection which could lead to pneumonia</p>

Dysphagia can also lead to:

 <p>Choking</p>	 <p>Malnutrition</p>	 <p>Dehydration</p>
 <p>Weight loss</p>	 <p>Pneumonia</p>	 <p>Reduced quality of life</p>



Other options for eating and drinking

If you are at risk of aspiration, Speech and Language Therapists and doctors may talk about having food, fluids and medication in a different way.

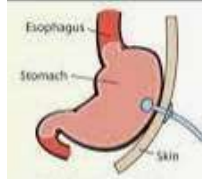
This is a medical decision and not right for everybody.



Intravenous fluids (IV) on a drip



NG tube in the nose and into the stomach



PEG tube into the stomach

These options are not good for everyone, everyone is different.



What is eating/drinking at risk?

Sometimes, other options for feeding may not be right. If this happens, a person may eat and drink at risk.



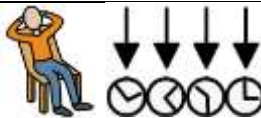
This means eating and drinking with dysphagia



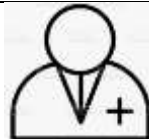
Food or drink could go into the lungs (aspiration)



This means the person could get pneumonia or ill.



This means a person can eat for comfort, pleasure to help with routine.



Doctors, nurses and therapists will help you make this decision.

Who can help?



Speech and Language Therapists can look at your swallow.



Speech and Language Therapists will see if eating and drinking is safe

If eating and drinking is difficult, food might look different. It might look like this:



Level 4



Level 5



Level 6

Drinks might be thickened



The Speech and Language Therapists may give some techniques to help the swallow.

What can help?

Things that can help eating and drinking



Being awake and alert



Siting upright



Take time to eat and drink



Try not to speak when eating and drinking



Small mouthfuls/sips



For more information please visit:

NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/swallowing-problems-dysphagia/>

National Stroke Association:
<https://www.stroke.org.uk/effects-of-stroke/physical-effects-of-stroke/swallowing-problems>

Stroke Therapy office number: 01225 821496

RUH SLT email: ruh_tr.SLT@nhs.net

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG

01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

Date of publication: June 2023 | Ref: RUH ASU/008
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