

Swallowing Information leaflet (Ward)

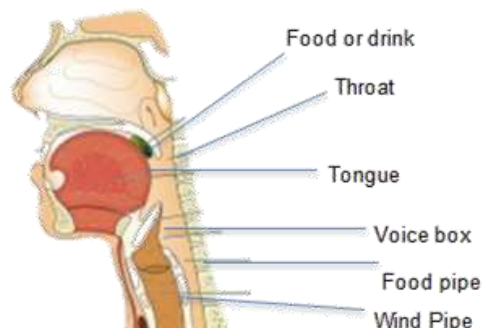
Swallowing involves nerves and the co-ordination of many muscles, some of which control the movement of the jaw, cheeks, lips, tongue, soft palate and the process of breathing

There are 3 stages of swallowing:-

Oral Stage: holding food and drink in your mouth, chewing food so it is ready to swallow and then moving the food to the back of your mouth and into your throat.

Pharyngeal Stage: when food is passed to the throat the swallow reflex automatically happens. The swallow reflex makes sure that your windpipe is closed off during the swallow, making sure that food does not go down the wrong way.

Oesophageal Stage: the food is then passed into your gullet or oesophagus and enters your stomach.



What can go wrong?

When a person experiences a swallowing problem (also known as dysphagia) there may be a risk of food or drink going down the *wrong way* and entering the windpipe;

going down to the lungs instead of the stomach. This can cause chest infections, aspiration pneumonia and/or choking.

Swallowing problems can also contribute to risks of dehydration and malnutrition.

A swallowing problem is usually caused by conditions that damage the muscles and the nerves used in swallowing. This can happen due to conditions such as stroke, head injury, head and neck cancer, dementia and other progressive neurological conditions (e.g. Motor Neurone Disease, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis and Huntingdon's Chorea).

Signs and symptoms of dysphagia include:-

- Drooling saliva or drinks
- Difficulty starting the swallow
- Coughing, choking or throat-clearing when eating and drinking
- Feeling food stuck in your throat

The Speech and Language Therapist assesses these problems and provides advice, helpful strategies and, if appropriate, therapy to make eating and drinking as SAFE as possible.

Sometimes it is necessary to change diet and fluid textures or place a person nil by mouth to prevent food and drink going down the wrong way onto the lungs.

Swallowing recommendation notices will be displayed above the patient's bed to ensure all staff and visitors are aware of current safe eating and drinking guidelines. If you have any objections to this or are aware that your relative would not wish to consent to displaying this information please make ward staff aware and an alternative will be arranged that will not affect the general care or treatment of the patient.

Things that can help your swallow:-

- Avoid having meals when tired or anxious.
- Sit comfortably in an upright chair, never lie down when eating and drinking.
- If a carer is required to help with feeding, ensure they are at an equal height so that the food being given can be clearly seen.
- Allow time when eating and drinking.
- Avoid taking large mouthfuls of food or 'gulping down' drinks.
- Making sure each sip or mouthful is swallowed before taking the next one.
- Avoid mixing food and drink in the same mouthful.
- Avoid talking and eating at the same time.
- After eating, ensure there is no food left in the gums, teeth or cheeks.
- Try to remain upright for 20-30 minutes after eating.

You can contact your Adult Speech and Language Therapist whilst you are in hospital via your named nurse or telephone:-

Bishop Auckland General Hospital
Telephone: 01388 455134

University Hospital of North Durham
Telephone: 0191 3333152

Darlington Memorial Hospital
Telephone: 01325 743152

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Chester-le-Street Hospital
Telephone: 0191 3332591

Shotley Bridge Hospital
Telephone: 01207 594517

Sedgefield Community Hospital
Telephone: 01388 455200

Richardson Road Hospital
Telephone: 01388 455200

Weardale Hospital
Telephone: 01388 455200

Contact details

Central Appointments Bureau
Speech & Language Therapy
Bishop Auckland General Hospital
Cockton Hill Road
Bishop Auckland
County Durham
DL14 6AD
Tel: 01388 455200

Please help us:

We need your comments, concerns complaints and compliments to deliver the best service possible. Please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0800 783 5774**, or email cdda-tr.PatientExperienceCDDFT@nhs.net.

We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.