
Compensatory Strategies for Early Changes in Swallowing

Diet Type

- Eat softer foods that are easier to chew and swallow.
- Add minced or pureed foods to your diet if solid foods require a lot of effort to chew and swallow.
- Avoid very dry foods and foods with tiny particles, such as seeds.
- Add extra gravy/sauce/condiments on food for additional moisture.
- Avoid mixed consistencies – food that has solid and liquid (e.g., cereal with milk, chicken noodle soup etc.)

Swallowing

- Sit upright when eating and drinking.
- Take smaller amounts per each bite or mouthful. Chew thoroughly before swallowing.
- Swallow more than once to clear food through your throat. If necessary, take a sip of liquid to wash down any remaining food.
- Drink 1 sip at a time if you frequently cough or choke when drinking liquids. Hold liquid at front of your mouth with chin down, then swallow. Use a straw if you are able to suck in the liquid in small amounts.
- Drink thicker liquids such as smoothies or thicken thin liquids with a thickener, if you cannot prevent yourself from coughing on thin liquids.
- Avoid talking or distractions when eating or drinking.
- Avoid sucking on hard candies.
- Monitor for signs of swallowing difficulty: coughing or excessive throat clearing during/after meals, stuck sensation in throat or choking while eating solids, changes in breathing while swallowing.

Pills/Tablets

- Put pills/tablets in applesauce or yogurt for swallowing.

Mouth Care to Minimize Risk of Bacterial Infections

- Brush your teeth, tongue, and roof of mouth after eating.
- Check your mouth to be sure it is clear of all food particles.
- Clean mouth with water/baking soda mixture and/or mouthwash