

# DYSPHAGIA

PROBLEMS WITH CHEWING AND SWALLOWING FOOD AND LIQUIDS

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

**BEFORE THE SWALLOW**  
Food falls out of mouth



**DURING THE SWALLOW**

Hard to chew  
Takes too long to eat  
Food stays in mouth  
Food stays in throat  
Food goes down “the wrong way”  
Hard to swallow pills

**AFTER THE SWALLOW**

Coughing  
Choking  
Wet voice  
Wet breathing

## CONSEQUENCES OF DYSPHAGIA



**MALNUTRITION**  
Weight loss



**DEHYDRATION**  
Problems with thinking  
Dark urine  
Fatigue  
Dizziness



**ASPIRATION**  
Pneumonia  
Choking  
Death

- **INCREASED LENGTH** of stay in hospital
- **PLACEMENT** decisions
- **QUALITY** of life

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



### DO:

- Tell your doctor
- Ask to see a speech language pathologist
- Wear your dentures, glasses and hearing aids
- Only eat when fully awake
- Sit upright and then for 30 minutes after you've eaten

**DON'T**  
TALK  
WHILE  
EATING

## WHAT OTHERS CAN DO

**HELP**

Help you open your containers...  
Help you cut your food...  
Help you eat...  
Give small bites and sips...  
Wait until you've swallowed  
before giving you more...



### DON'T



Do not talk to you while you're eating



Do not make you eat too fast

IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH CHEWING AND SWALLOWING, TELL YOUR DOCTOR AND SEE A SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST