

Frequently asked questions

Will I get dehydrated if I only drink thickened fluids?

No, thickened fluids provide the same amount of hydration as normal fluids.

Will I still get the same amount of calories if I have to change my diet?

A puree meal may have less calories due to the additional water added and cooking time needed to make the food soft. You can increase the calories by adding full fat milk, cream or butter to foods.

Do I need any special equipment to change my diet?

If you have been recommended a puree diet then you need to use a blender to get the correct consistency. You may also need to use a strainer to ensure there are no bits or fibres that can cause choking.

What shall I do if I am losing weight?

If you are losing weight, then you need to see your GP. Your GP may prescribe some nutritional supplements or they may wish to refer you to a dietician who will give you specialist advice about what to eat.

What to do if something changes

Dysphagia can be a long term or short term condition. If you feel that something has changed, it is important to get advice before changing your diet and fluids.

Please contact your G.P. who will refer you to a Speech & Language Therapist who can review you properly.

Contact details

**Community Speech & Language
Therapy Department**
Tel : 0845 1558081



Livewell Southwest



@livewellsw

A Guide to Dysphagia



Eating and drinking with
swallowing problems

What is Dysphagia?

Dysphagia is a medical term which means swallowing difficulty. People with Dysphagia may have problems swallowing food or fluids which can result in them going down the windpipe.

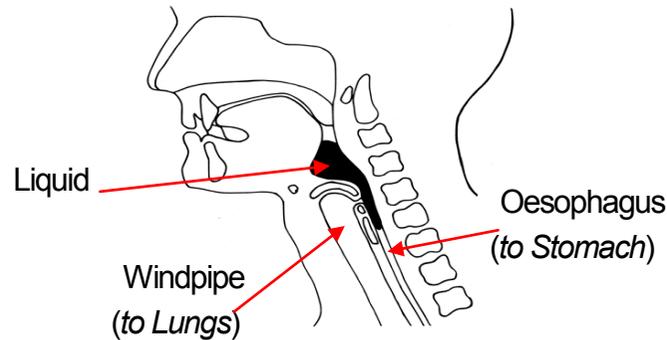
Dysphagia is not a disease, it is a condition that is the result of a disorder, disease or illness. It may be caused by conditions including Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease, Mouth & Throat Cancer, Dementia and others.

What happens when we swallow?

Food or Fluid are put into the mouth. Once chewed, the tongue pushes the food or fluid towards the back of the mouth to trigger the swallow. As we swallow the windpipe is closed for protection. This prevents any food or fluid from entering the windpipe. Dysphagia is when the swallow is unsafe and may allow food or fluid into the lungs.

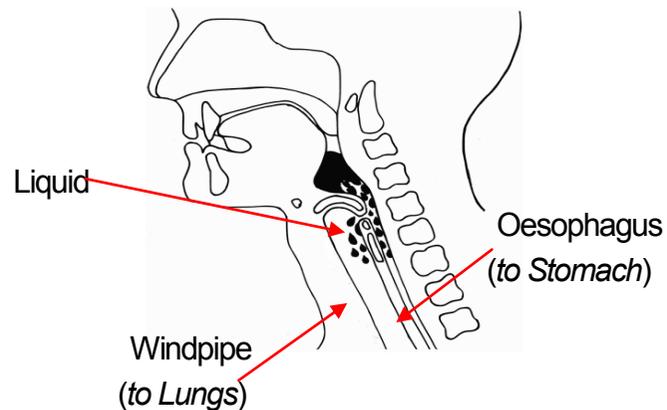
A safe swallow

Fluid does not go into the windpipe



An unsafe swallow

Fluid is going into the windpipe



Signs of Dysphagia

- Difficulty controlling food in the mouth
- Drooling
- Pocketing food in side of mouth
- Choking or Coughing before, during or after a meal
- Slurred speech
- Weight loss, when there is no other reason
- Feeling of food stuck in the throat
- Recurrent Chest infections
- Breathing changes when eating or drinking
- Wet, gurgly sounding voice
- Frequent throat clearing when eating or drinking
- Weak voluntary cough

Patient may experience one or a combination of any of these symptoms