

Dysphagia

(Trouble with swallowing)

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE DYSPHAGIA?

- You may have trouble chewing or getting the food or liquid from your mouth into your throat.
- Food or liquid may stick in your throat.
- Food or liquid may “go down the wrong pipe.”

When food or liquid that should go into your esophagus (food pipe) gets into your trachea (windpipe), it is called aspiration. Aspiration can cause choking or pneumonia.

Dysphagia can also cause weight loss or malnutrition.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Speech-language pathologists (SLP) are part of your care team. They have specialized training to manage swallowing disorders. Your SLP may recommend changes to your diet or teach you strategies to make it safer and easier to swallow.

SLP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOU

Food:

Drink:

Medication:

*If crushed medications are recommended, be sure to check with your pharmacy/doctor to make sure this is OK to do with the medicine you take.



GENERAL STRATEGIES TO KEEP YOU SAFE WHILE EATING AND DRINKING

- Sit fully upright during and after meals
- Take small bites and sips
- Eat and drink slowly
- Keep your mouth clean



WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY DOCTOR?

Contact your doctor right away if you have these symptoms, which can be signs of illness caused by aspiration:

1. Fever
2. Shortness of breath
3. Chest congestion
4. Excessive cough, change in voice or shortness of breath while eating or drinking

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY: 8 a.m. to 4:30p.m.

Phone: **(626) 256-HOPE (4673)**

AFTER HOURS AND WEEKENDS:

Call the Nurse Triage Center at **(626) 471-7133**.

CONTACT YOUR SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY TEAM IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.

Phone: **(626) 218-0040**

Fax: **(626) 930-5369**

Main Medical — Room 1026

1500 E. Duarte Road

Duarte, CA 91010