

Swallowing Alert:

Swallowing Difficulty Self Evaluation

Do I Have a Swallowing Problem?

- | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| • Do I have to cough to clear my throat after I eat or drink something? | Yes | No |
| • Does my voice sound wet when I speak after eating or drinking? | Yes | No |
| • Do I have frequent lung Infections or feel like I am always fighting something off? | Yes | No |
| • Is my temperature raised right after I eat or drink something? | Yes | No |
| • Does my nose run when I am eating a meal? | Yes | No |

I said yes to at least one of the statements above, now what?

- Realize that this is a serious and potentially life threatening condition that must be addressed. It can lead to getting food or liquids in your lungs which can be fatal, cause pneumonia or chronic lung problems which will affect your quality of life.
- consult with your neurologist about getting a swallow study
- contact a speech and language pathologist for help and training

What can be done to help this?

- A speech therapist can provide swallowing exercises and techniques that can help.
- you might need to add thickener to your liquids so you can swallow safely. You will need to consult with a speech therapist to help you decide how much is needed.
- There are some highly effective therapies such as Vital Stim that can help strengthen your muscles for swallowing. If you are interested in this, be sure to find a therapist certified in the use of this device.
- Always clean your mouth before eating or drinking anything so if you do get something in your lungs, it is not full of bacteria from your mouth.