

Tips for Eating and Drinking with Swallowing Difficulties

Eating and drinking when you have difficulties swallowing can be a scary and daunting task. **Try a few of these tips to make this process easier and safer:**

- take small mouthfuls of food
- avoid taking another bite until you are sure your last one is completely swallowed
- take your time
- sit as upright in your chair as possible
- reduce distractions like conversations or watching TV
- refill your cup when it is halfway empty to reduce how much you have to tilt your head to get a drink
- try drinking very cold liquids to encourage swallowing with a meal
- equipment such as plate guards, larger utensils, cups with handles, and non-slip mats can help with getting food and drink to the mouth more efficiently.

The following process can help with complete swallowing:

1. Take small mouthfuls of food/drink, close your lips, and chew well. Then take a big, deliberate swallow.
2. Swallow again to make sure all of the food and/or drink has gone down
3. Try licking your lips and inside your mouth with your tongue to make sure all of the food is gone before taking another bite or drink.