



Dysphagia = Swallowing Difficulties

ORAL DYSPHAGIA (mouth)

- Decreased range of motion, strength, or coordination in lips, teeth, tongue, cheeks
- Difficulty chewing or moving food back for initiation of swallow
- Structural abnormalities (ex. tongue tie, cleft lip/palate, etc.)

PHARYNGEAL DYSPHAGIA (throat)

- Decreased range of motion, strength or coordination of the tongue base, pharynx/pharyngeal muscles, larynx (vocal cords), or epiglottis
- Structural abnormalities (ex. laryngeal cleft, vocal cord issues, laryngomalacia, tracheoesophageal fistula (TEF), etc.)

Specialists

- Otolaryngologist (ENT)
- Speech-language pathologist (SLP)
- Gastroenterologist
- (GI)/PCP
- Nutritionist/Dietician
- Neurologist

Assessment

- Individual or team assessment
- Feeding evaluation (SLP)
- VFSS (video-fluoroscopic swallow study)
- FEES
 - (fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing)
- Consult your MD with concerns

Consult your physician for a script for a feeding evaluation

Possible Signs and Symptoms of dysphagia

- Coughing/choking during or after eating/drinking
- Congestion, wet vocal quality, excessive drooling
- Back arching, red watery eyes, furrowed brows (common in infants)
- Decreased weight gain, nutritional deficits, dehydration
- Breathing difficulties, frequent respiratory illness/pneumonia
- Aspiration (confirmed via VFSS or FEES), aspiration can be silent
- May indicate/coexist with underlying medical conditions
 - (ex. prematurity, heart/pulmonary disease, genetic disorders, neurological conditions, or structural issues)
- May need medical/pharmaceutical intervention