

Dysphagia

Disordered Swallowing

What it is

Swallowing is a complex process that involves up to 50 pairs of muscles and nerves. A swallow has 3 phases: oral, pharyngeal, and oesophageal. If something goes wrong during one of these phases, a person may have difficulty or discomfort in swallowing. This is called **Dysphagia**. Causes of dysphagia include stroke, Parkinson's disease, dementia, physical or intellectual disability.

What the research says

Between 7-22% of Australians have Dysphagia. This number jumps to 40-50% in older Australians (> 65 years). It is important that dysphagia is diagnosed early. If left untreated, Dysphagia can cause malnutrition, dehydration, airway obstruction, pneumonia, and/or social isolation.

What we do

A speech pathologist will assess how well you can use your lips, tongue, jaw and throat for swallowing, as well as assessing what happens when you eat and drink. Treatment may consist of diet and fluid modification, or exercises to improved quality and strength of the swallow. Wollongong Speech Pathology abides by the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI). Dysphagia often needs a team approach: this means we will work with your doctor, dietitian, occupational therapist, or whoever else needs to be involved.

Contact us if you want to know more

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