

Safe swallowing strategies

Learning safe swallowing



What it is

Dysphagia is the difficulty in swallowing (see our 'Dysphagia' handout for more information). People with Dysphagia can **learn and use** safe swallowing strategies to make mealtimes safer and easier. Examples of **safe swallowing strategies** include; taking smaller mouthfuls, slower feeding pace, and sitting fully upright. Without safe swallowing strategies, a person might be at risk of choking, aspiration, or might be dependent on others for meals. We want to promote **independence!**

What the research says

Safe swallowing strategies should be individualised. This means they must be prescribed by a speech pathologist and meet a person's specific mealtime needs (Mealtime Support Resources, 2019). We can teach safe swallowing strategies using **visual, written, and verbal reminders**. Research shows that people with memory and cognitive deficits can learn safe swallowing strategies from written and visual prompts (Howle et al., 2014).

What we do

First, we assess a person's swallowing skills and identify suitable safe swallowing strategies. Then, we can provide resources that will assist the person to learn and use their safe swallowing strategies. For example, we can provide a dysphagia placemat with visual reminders to eat or drink slowly, OR a sign for the fridge at home, OR staff training about positive mealtime support.

Contact us if you want to know more

PO Box 1548, Unanderra NSW 2526
0418 476 235
www.wollongongspeech.com.au

