

SWALLOW MORE SAFELY



Difficulty with swallowing (dysphagia) may occur frequently in people with MS. Problems are typically mild or transient and may also be present without awareness of symptoms. Dysphagia may interfere with how safely and efficiently a person swallows, whether there is adequate hydration/nutrition, or risk of aspiration pneumonia

COMMON SWALLOWING PROBLEM

- Delay in triggering the swallow: "I can't get my swallow started"
- Residue in the throat after the swallow due to weakness: "It still feels like there is something stuck in my throat"
- Inadequate airway protection (with possible aspiration) due to weakness or poor timing: "It goes down the wrong tube and I cough"



A Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) can evaluate specific swallowing problems during clinical assessment of drinking or eating. More technical procedures, such as a modified barium swallow (MBS) in radiology, allows for direct observation. Barium is mixed with a variety of textures (liquids and solids), and performance during the three phases of swallow (oral, pharyngeal, and upper esophageal) may be observed. Based on the results of each evaluation, an SLP can recommend specific strategies.