

# Dysphagia

Speech-language pathologists: a vital part of your care team.

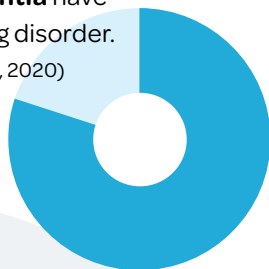


## What is Dysphagia?

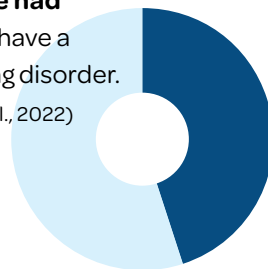
Dysphagia (*dis-fay-juh*) is the medical term for a swallowing disorder, meaning a difficulty or inability to swallow. Dysphagia can affect people of all ages. Left untreated, this disorder can have a devastating effect on a person's social, emotional and physical well-being.

## Dysphagia is More Common Than You Think

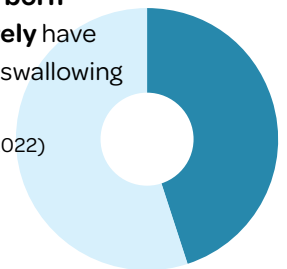
**80%** of people with dementia have a swallowing disorder.  
(Espinosa-Val, 2020)



**42%** of people who have had a stroke have a swallowing disorder.  
(Banda et al., 2022)



Up to **40%** of infants born prematurely have feeding or swallowing problems.  
(Uhm et al., 2022)



Speech-language pathologists are experts in dysphagia assessment, treatment and management.

# Identifying and Treating Dysphagia

Dysphagia in itself is not a disease but a common symptom in diseases or injuries affecting the brain or nervous system, as well as in medical conditions resulting in structural or mechanical changes to the face, jaw, mouth, tongue, or neck. Dysphagia may also be present in children with delayed or disordered development. **Speech-language pathologists** are uniquely qualified to offer **comprehensive care** for people with dysphagia.

**Treatments** for dysphagia can restore swallowing function or compensate for a person’s inability to swallow. Speech-language pathology researchers were the first to develop and advance **innovative imaging techniques** to assess dysphagia as well as **evidence-based treatments** that can help restore the ability to eat and drink as safely and efficiently as possible.



## Symptoms

- Food, drinks, or saliva falling from mouth
- Finding it hard to chew and swallow food
- Wet or gurgly voice when drinking or eating
- Coughing episodes when drinking or eating
- Feeling as though food gets stuck in throat
- Recurring chest infections
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extra effort or time needed to finish a meal

**Make a speech-language pathologist a part of your healthcare team.**  
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