

SIGNS OF SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

The following is a guide for what to look for when monitoring for swallowing difficulties:

You might see:

- Teary eyes
- Food spilling out of the mouth
- Inability to close lips completely when swallowing
- Holding food in the mouth/Pooling
- A large amount of residue or food left in the mouth after swallowing
- Reduced mastication/ chewing ability
- Blue in the face – suction or call 000
- Increased respiratory rate
- Food/drink escaping through nose
- Delayed swallow reflex
- Taking a long time to eat

You might hear:

- Coughing
- Throat clearing after swallowing
- Wet/gurgly voice after swallowing
- Reports from resident that swallow is painful or they cannot manage certain foods/drink

Other factors to be aware of when that may put people at higher risk for aspiration and/or aspiration pneumonia:

- Weak cough/throat clear
- Inability to independently sit upright for oral intake
- Inability to self-feed
- History of aspiration pneumonia
- A known history of silent aspiration
- Laryngeal/oesophageal cancers (history of radiation/surgery)
- Excess secretions/difficulty clearing mucous in the throat
- Bed-bound or immobile
- GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disorder)
- Poor oral hygiene
- Cranial nerve damage
- Neurological diagnoses
- Cognitive impairment (poor insight)
- Reduced stamina
- Poor breath support
- Poor oral hygiene
- Respiratory difficulties

*****If you note any of the above signs or indicators for dysphagia, please make a referral***

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