

## **Dysphagia: Eating and Drinking Difficulties**



### **What This Guide is for**

This guide is to help you and your families and carers.



This is to help you notice if you might have dysphagia.



This guide gives signs to look out for and questions you can fill in to take to the doctor.



### **What is Dysphagia?**

Dysphagia means it is hard or painful to swallow food, drink or medicine.



It can make people cough or choke.



It can cause chest infections.



It can make someone lose weight, get tired or become unwell.



**Dysphagia is very serious.**

You must get help if you notice problems.

## What to Look For

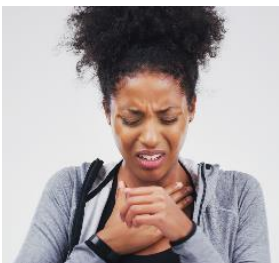
you might have dysphagia if:



- You cough, choke or splutter when eating or drinking



- Your voice sounds wet



- You get lots of chest infections



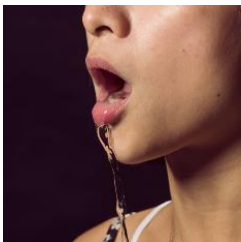
- You feel scared or upset at mealtimes



- You lose weight without trying



- You take a long time to eat



- Food falls out of your mouth, or you drool



- Your face goes red or your eyes water when eating



## **What To Do**

If you notice any of these signs:

- Speak to your doctor or learning disability nurse
- Ask to see a speech and language therapist (SALT)
- Take this form to your appointment



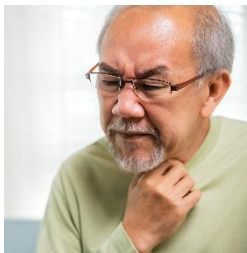
## Questions

Tick yes or no. There is space to write more if you would like to.



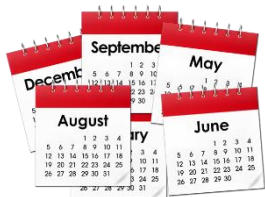
### 1. Do you cough or choke when eating or drinking?

Yes  No  Sometimes



### 2. Do you find it hard to swallow? (Pain, struggle, food gets stuck)

Yes  No  Sometimes



### 3. Have you choked while eating or drinking in the last year?

Yes  No  Not sure

**4. Do you often get chest infections?** (More than 2 in 6 months)



Yes  No  Sometimes

**5. Do you get a lot of urine infections?**



Yes  No  Sometimes

**6. Have you lost weight without trying?**



Yes  No  Maybe



### 7. Do you have trouble drinking water?

Yes

No

Sometimes



### 8. Does eating or drinking make you tired or frightened?

Yes

No

Sometimes

### 9. Can eating or drinking make life feel difficult?



Yes

No

Sometimes



It is important to give this form to the doctor, nurse, learning disability team or medical professional.

By filling this form in you can get help to stay well.