

CHEWING AND SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

- Eat foods that are softer in texture (i.e. scrambled eggs, poached eggs, omelets, yogurt, chunky style applesauce, rice, large curd cottage cheese, baked potato, milkshakes or puddings).
- Avoid sticky or moist foods. Examples: puddings, fruits, sauces, mashed potatoes, dry casseroles, unripe bananas, bakery goods and ground meats (broth does not help soften, gravy does soften).
- Try chopped meats and add gravy.
- Use a blender to help soften foods. Remember food taste better if it is cooked before it is blended. It is easier to blend warm foods.
- Try sauces on vegetables (i.e. cheese sauce, cream sauces).
- Try stews or casseroles with added liquids.
- Thin food with melted butter, gravies, broth, sour cream, or mayonnaise.
- Soak dry food in coffee, milk, soup until soft.
- Avoid highly acidic foods (i.e. tomatoes, citrus fruits and juices). Try bananas, canned pears or peaches.
- Avoid highly salty foods.
- Avoid hot spices (i.e. pepper, chili powder, nutmeg).
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes.
- Eat foods cold. Cold or chilled foods provide a temperature sensation that can aid in the detection of fluids during swallowing.
- Try carbonated beverages. Carbonation has the quality of gentle irritation that can help sense it being in mouth and throat.
- Avoid introducing different textures of food and drink at the same time as these are not controlled well in the mouth.
- Place food well back on the tongue or by pushing food back into the mouth using a spoon or fingers, especially when tongue movement is limited.

MULTIVITAMIN

Taking a multivitamin daily is recommended. Use either pill or liquid form that approximates 100% of the US RDA for nutrients. Avoid mega-dose supplements that can cause toxicity, constipation and other side effects.

FREE WATER SOURCES

Loss of sensations or control to the oral cavity can lead to fluid deficits. It is important to include free water sources daily in your diet when swallowing difficulties arise to help with digestion and to prevent dehydration. It is not advisable to wash down your food with excessive amounts of fluids, which could cause aspiration. When possible try sipping fluids or a spoonful of fluids to help with swallowing. Some examples of free water sources are: jello, frozen popsicles, frozen fruit juices, sherbets, fruit ice, ice chips, watermelon, lettuce, and cantaloupe.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- * Feeding can become difficult and time consuming. Suggest 5 or 6 feedings each day or 3 meals and 3 snacks.
- * Avoid interruptions during meals.
- * Allow yourself time to rest before each meal.
- * You should remain upright for approximately 15-30 minutes after eating to help prevent aspiration.

If you need help with menu planning, ask your doctor to refer you to a Registered Dietitian. Nutrition counseling is provided at the Family Practice Center. Call 744-4611 and ask for a nutrition appointment.

If you have questions concerning utensils ask your doctor to refer you to an occupational therapist. There are many different types of devices that can aid in self-feeding.