

# **What is Dysphagia?**

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# Dysphagia Overview

**Dysphagia = Swallowing Problem**

Muscles in the **mouth** and/or **throat** are **not** working correctly

Dysphagia can lead to:

- Food and drinks falling into the airway
- Pneumonia
- Dehydration
- Lack of proper nutrients
- Pain or Discomfort

# Causes of Dysphagia

Common causes of dysphagia listed below:

- Stroke
- Head Injury
- Neurological disease (Parkinson's, ALS)
- Breathing Difficulty
- Obstruction in the throat
- Damage to the throat

# Evaluating and Treating Dysphagia

A speech pathologist will come see you to...

1. **Look** at the **muscles** in your face, mouth, and throat
2. Give you **food** and **liquid** to **swallow**
3. **Watch** and **listen**

**If** there is a swallowing problem, **then** your speech pathologist will recommend an **instrumental swallow study**

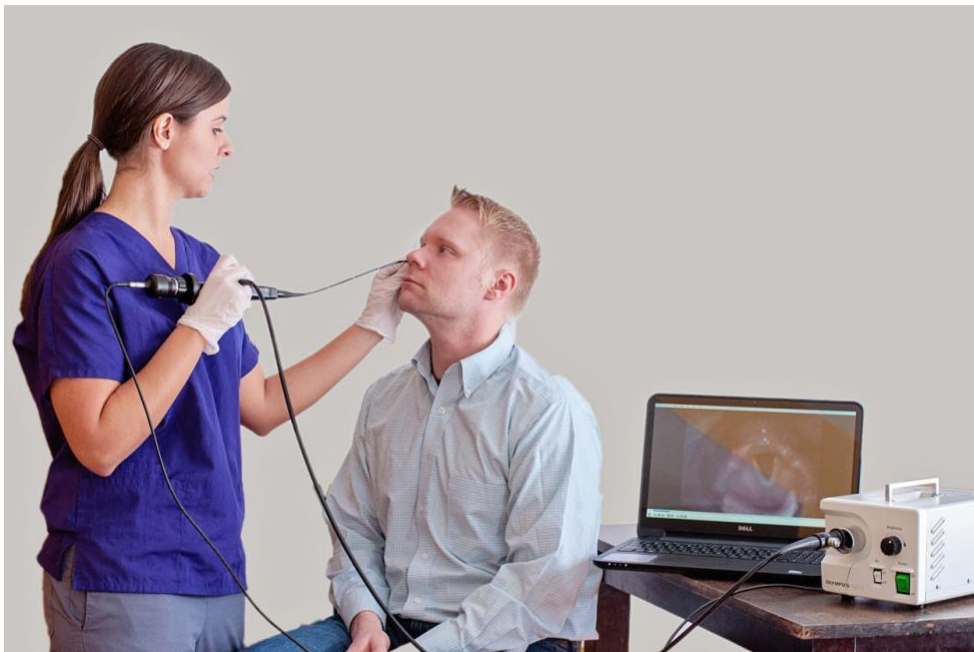
An **instrumental swallow study** looks **inside** your **throat** with either...

1. An **XRAY** called Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS)



<http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-medicine/otolaryngology/about-the-department/subspecialties/voice-and-swallow-disorders/swallowing-disorders.html>

## 2. A **Camera** called Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)



<http://wearefeesable.com/what-is-fees/>

If you **need** one of these tests, you will be **given more information.**

# Diet Recommendations

**Diet recommendations** are based on instrumental swallow study **results**

**Diet Recommendations** = the food and liquids you can **safely eat and drink**

If **nothing** is **safe** to eat or drink, the speech pathologist will refer you to a **doctor** for other **nutrition options**



# Signs and Symptoms of Dysphagia

- Coughing or choking when eating
- Coughing or choking when drinking
- Wet/gurgly voice
- Drooling and increased saliva
- Holding food in mouth and not swallowing
- Multiple swallows for one bite or sip
- Feeling like food/liquid is stuck in throat
- Pneumonia

# Aspiration

Aspiration = when food or liquid falls into your airway

In photo below:  
Airway = Trachea

## Normal Swallow

## Aspiration

