DYSPHAGIA: [di-sfey-juh, -jee-uh] noun, 1. difficulty in swallowing.

Dysphagia is the medical term for difficulty swallowing or paralysis of the throat muscles. This condition can make eating, drinking, taking medicine and breathing difficult. Many stroke survivors experience dysphagia or trouble swallowing at some point after a stroke. Difficulty swallowing is most common immediately after a stroke.

Loss of gag reflex and food getting stuck in lungs
Difficulty starting to swallow and choking when food gets stuck
Coughing or gagging while swallowing
Drooling
Liquid coming out of nose after trying to swallow
Point tongue outward
Swallowing

WHAT IT IS:
Dysphagia can lead to malnutrition and dehydration. Patients who suffer from dysphagia can develop respiratory problems, such as pneumonia or respiratory infections, due to the inhalation of food or liquids.

DIETARY CHANGES
Dietary changes may be necessary in order to effectively manage your dysphagia.

CHANGING TEXTURE OR THICKNESS OF FOOD
You may be able to chew and swallow smaller pieces so chopping, mincing or puréeing food may make it easier for you to eat. Food should be prepared and consumed correctly to avoid inhaling into the lungs.

EXERCISE
Exercising the tongue, lips, nasal, and mouth can help relax and strengthen the muscles as well as increase their flexibility. Some techniques include tucking the chin or rotating the head.

THERAPY
The most common treatment for difficulty swallowing is swallow therapy done with the help of a speech language, occupational, or physical therapist. Some stroke survivors may be candidates for Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES). Some medications, such as muscle relaxers, can help open the throat and make swallowing easier.

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TIPS TO LIVING WITH DYSPHAGIA:

TREATMENT

COMPLICATIONS

EXERCISE

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