

SWALLOWING WORKSHEET

Swallowing tips

- Cut food into smaller pieces. Take smaller bites when eating. Avoid gulping big sips when drinking.
- Avoid straws if you have a swallowing problem, as their use may promote choking.
- Alternate food with sips of fluid to help your swallowing tract remain clear. This is especially helpful if you have dry mouth.

Lifestyle changes

- Don't eat when overly tired. Try to eat before you reach that point.
- Eat at the table. This helps avoid distractions allowing you to focus on eating.
- Eat sitting straight. A chair at the table is better for posture than the couch or recliner.
- Don't stop going to restaurants if this is enjoyable to you. Call ahead to discuss your concerns. Your chef can prepare your meal to meet your needs. You can ask for a specific table if you are self-conscious. Early-bird specials are not only cheaper but often less crowded and less noisy.

Dietary tips

- Avoid dry, flaky foods like cornbread, toast, rice or cake unless moist. Sauces and gravy help keep your food tasty and moist.
- Thin liquids and water are often more difficult to swallow. Switch to thicker liquids. Mix pills in applesauce or yogurt if you have trouble swallowing.
- Try papaya fruit/juice to thin mouth secretions if they feel too thick.
- Be sure to drink your fluids, but give yourself more time to do so.
- Ask for a swallowing evaluation if you are coughing, drooling, feeling like you have trouble clearing your throat, trouble swallowing pills, changing your diet due to swallowing concerns or losing weight.
- Always report changes in swallowing to your doctor.

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