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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/swallowingdisorders.html>

Swallowing Disorders

Also called: Dysphagia

If you have a swallowing disorder, you may have difficulty or pain when swallowing. Some people cannot swallow at all. Others may have trouble swallowing liquids, foods, or saliva. This makes it hard to eat. Often, it can be difficult to take in enough calories and fluids to nourish your body.

Anyone can have a swallowing disorder, but it is more common in older adults. It often happens because of other conditions, including:

- Nervous system disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/neurologicdiseases.html>] , such as Parkinson's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/parkinsonsdisease.html>] and cerebral palsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/cerebralpalsy.html>]
- Problems with your esophagus, [<https://medlineplus.gov/esophagusdisorders.html>] including GERD [<https://medlineplus.gov/gerd.html>] (gastroesophageal reflux disease)
- Stroke [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>]
- Head [<https://medlineplus.gov/headinjuries.html>] or spinal cord [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinalcordinjuries.html>] injury
- Cancer of the head, neck [<https://medlineplus.gov/headandneckcancer.html>] , or esophagus [<https://medlineplus.gov/esophagealcancer.html>]




Medicines can help some people, while others may need surgery. Swallowing treatment with a speech-language pathologist can help. You may find it helpful to change your diet or hold your head or neck in a certain way when you eat. In very serious cases, people may need feeding tubes [<https://medlineplus.gov/nutritionalsupport.html>] .

NIH: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

Start Here

- Dysphagia [<https://www.enthealth.org/conditions/dysphagia/>] (American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)
- Dysphagia (Difficulty Swallowing) [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dysphagia/symptoms-causes/syc-20372028?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Barium Swallow [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/barium-swallow/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/transito-esofagogastroduodenal/>]
- Dysphagia Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/dysphagia-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/pruebas-de-disfagia/>]
- Tailored Barium Swallow Study [<https://www.nationaljewish.org/conditions/tests-procedures/imaging/tailored-barium-swallow?modal=1>] (National Jewish Health)
- Upper GI Endoscopy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-endoscopy>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-gastrointestinal-superior?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-esofagogastroduodenal/>]

Living With

- Swallowing Problems [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/eating-problems/swallowing-problems.html>] (American Cancer Society)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/como-sobrellevar-el-cancer/efectos-secundarios/problemas-alimentarios/problemas-de-deglucion.html>]


Related Issues

- Globus [<https://iffgd.org/gi-disorders/upper-gi-disorders/globus/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)


Specifics

- Oromandibular Dystonia [<https://dystonia-foundation.org/what-is-dystonia/types-dystonia/oromandibular/>] (Dystonia Medical Research Foundation)
- Trouble Swallowing After Stroke (Dysphagia) [<https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/effects-of-stroke/physical-effects/dysphagia>] (American Stroke Association)


Genetics

- Oculopharyngeal muscular dystrophy: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/oculopharyngeal-muscular-dystrophy>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Videos and Tutorials

- Swallowing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000126.htm>]  (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000126.htm>]

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Deglutition Disorders [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Deglutition+Disorders%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Transcutaneous electrical stimulation in chronic post-stroke oropharyngeal dysphagia: pooled biomechanical and... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40640318>]
- Article: Evaluating swallowing capacity in older adults with dysphagia: high protein, low... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40604458>]
- Article: Therapeutic effect of acupuncture on post-stroke dysphagia: A multicenter, randomized controlled... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40545007>]
- Swallowing Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Deglutition+Disorders%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

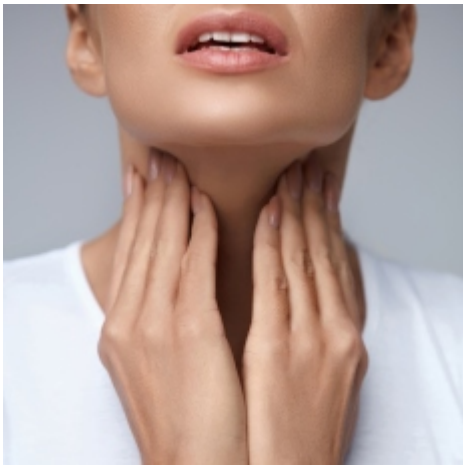
- Your Digestive System and How It Works [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/digestive-system-how-it-works>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/aparato-digestivo-funcionamiento>]

Find an Expert

- Find an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist) [<https://www.enthealth.org/find-ent/>]
(American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov>] 

Patient Handouts

- Esophageal manometry [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003884.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003884.htm>]
- Painful swallowing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003116.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003116.htm>]
- Swallowing difficulty [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007543.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007543.htm>]
- Swallowing problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000065.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000065.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Esophageal manometry [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003884.htm>]
- Painful swallowing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003116.htm>]
- Swallowing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000126.htm>]
- Swallowing difficulty [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007543.htm>]
- Swallowing problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000065.htm>]

Related Health Topics

- Esophagus Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/esophagusdisorders.html>]
- GERD [<https://medlineplus.gov/gerd.html>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/swallowingdisorders.html>] on *Swallowing Disorders*

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