

Swallowing in HD

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Advanced Specialist SLT

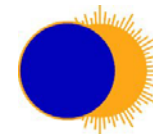


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What we will cover

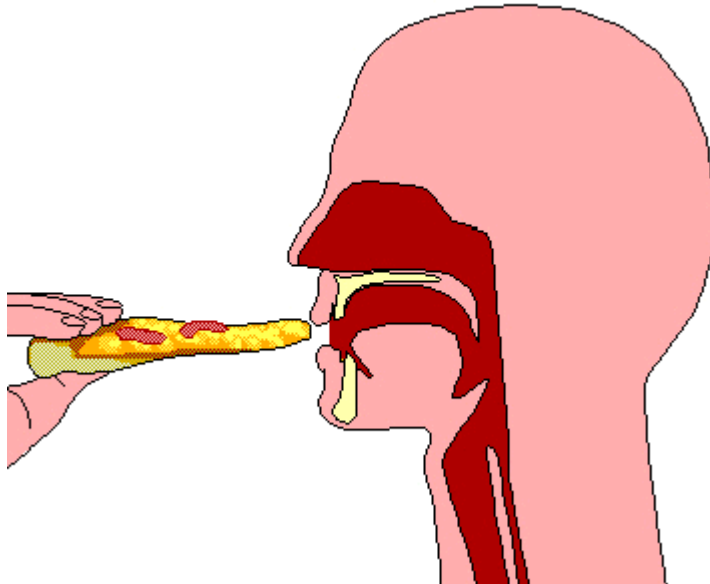
- Normal swallowing
- Swallowing in HD
- What to look out for
- What SLT can do
- Tips to help



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Normal swallow



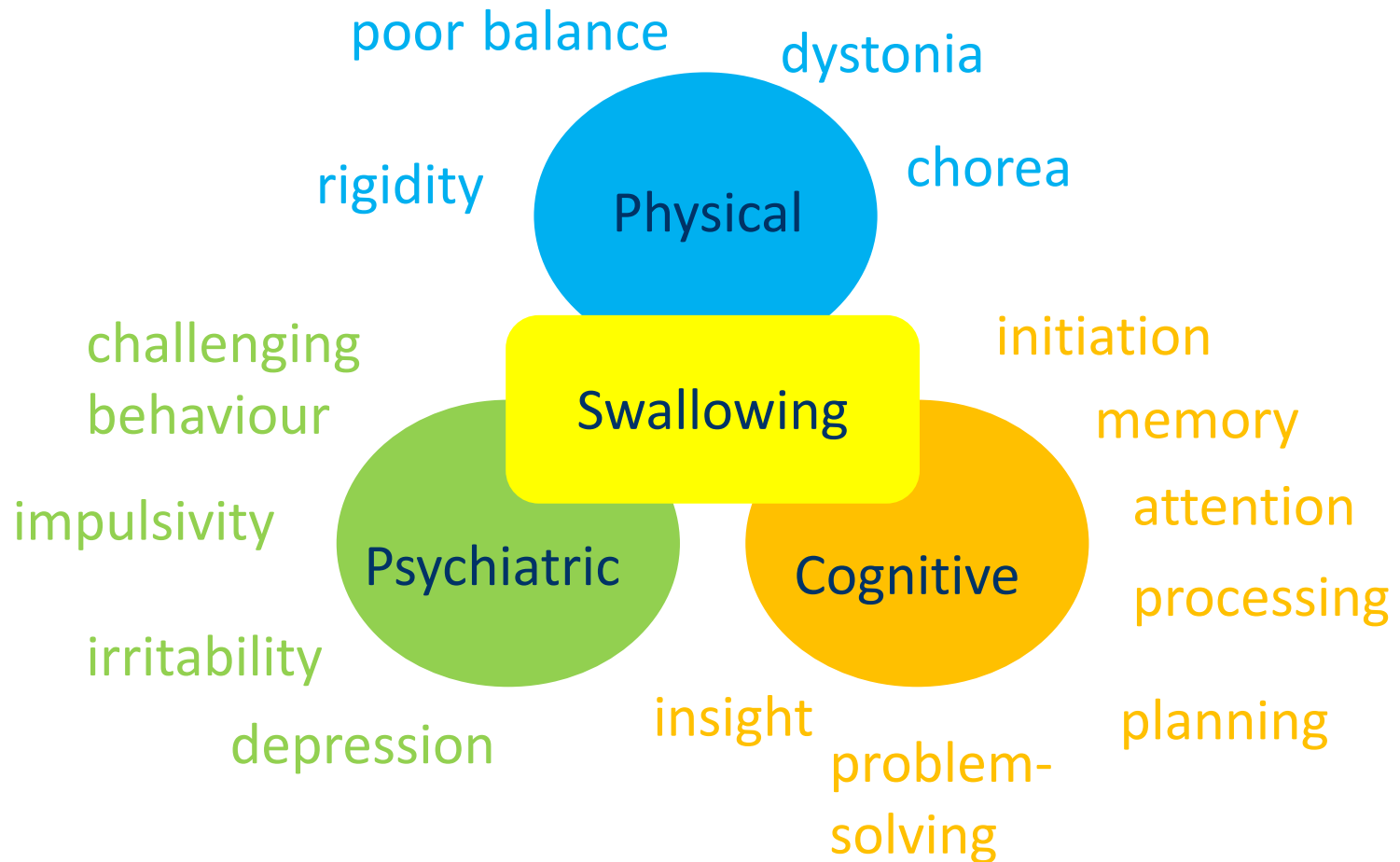
- Complex process involving many pairs of muscles and nerves.
- Involves chewing and controlling bolus in mouth (voluntary control) and swallowing it (reflex).



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Triad of Impairments



Impact of HD on swallowing

- Difficulty feeding self
- Impulsivity or reduced initiation
- Difficulty controlling and chewing the food in mouth
- Difficulty protecting airway when swallowing



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Signs of swallowing difficulty

- Coughing
- Choking
- Chest infections
- Wet sounding voice
- Red face/watering eyes
- Shortness of breath
- Not eating much
- Food left in mouth
- Slow chewing

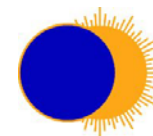
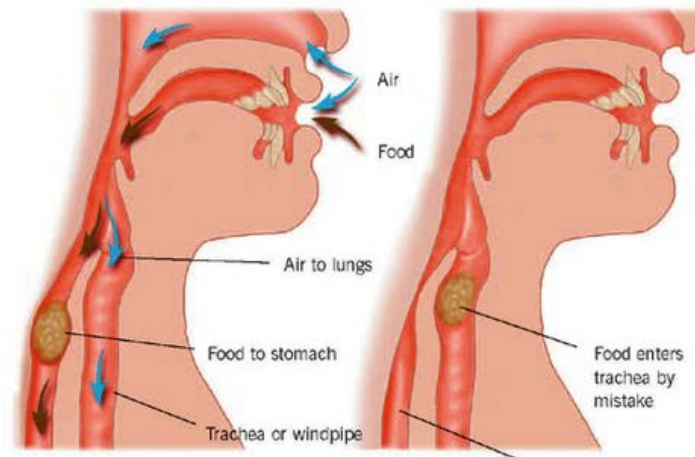


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Risks

- Aspiration → chest infections/pneumonia
- Choking
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Reduced quality of life – social and emotional impact.



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What can SLT do?

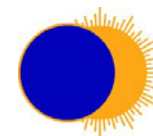
- Assess swallow during mealtimes/with drinks
- Modify food texture
- Thicken drinks
- Work with MDT (Physio/OT/Dietitians/Psychologists)
- Adapt environment, equipment
- Give personalised guidance on what help/assistance the person needs
- Advanced decision making



Safer swallowing strategies

- Quiet environment
- Sitting fully upright
- Ensuring alert and responsive
- Supervision or assistance
- Modified fluids/food as recommended by SLT
- Encourage independence where possible
- Prompts to 'slow down' and 'take a break'
- Regular small meals rather than big meals can help
- Good oral hygiene

**Contact GP/SLT if concerns re:
swallowing!**



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Meal mats

Mealmat: Joe Bloggs

Date: 17.02.15

Fork mashable diet

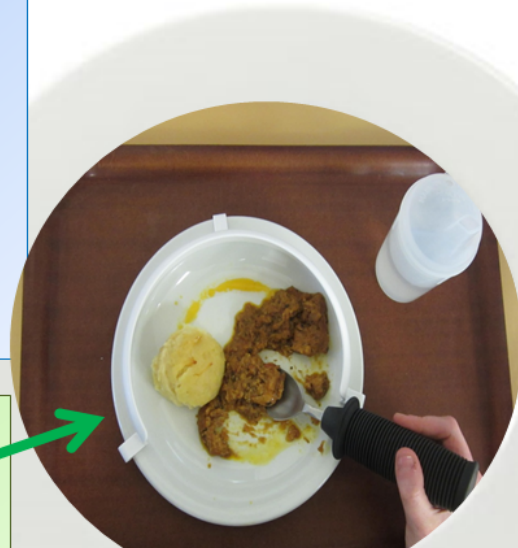
Syrup fluids

Positioning and set up

- Upright in chair.
- Meal on tray with plate guard.
- Built up spoon & spouted beaker.
- Sit down next to Joe.

Level of help

- Full set up.
- Prompt Joe to grip spoon
- When tired, help with hand-over-hand assistance.
- Constant supervision.



Communication

- Tell Joe what his meal is.
- Offer him choices e.g. gravy, drink, sauces.

Swallowing strategies

- Prompt Joe to clear mouth before taking next mouthful.
- Encourage two swallows per mouthful.
- Check mouth is empty at the end of meal.



STOP IF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS and advise nurse in charge:

Repeated Coughing; Episode of choking; Chest Infections