

# WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

A training guide for healthcare professionals



### WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

Swallowing is a complex process and involves the coordination of nerves and 50 different pairs of muscles in the face, neck, and oesophagus.<sup>1</sup>

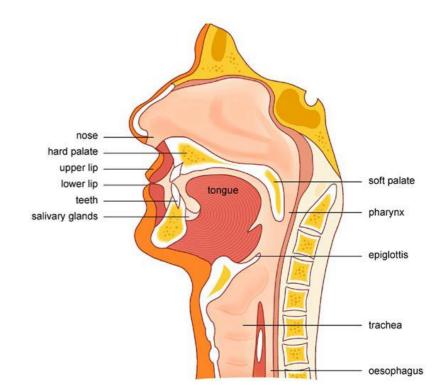
Dysphagia is a difficulty in swallowing solids or liquids, or both.<sup>2</sup>

**Oro-pharyngeal dysphagia is the most common type of dysphagia**, present in about 80-85% of dysphagia cases.<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT IS ASPIRATION?

Aspiration can be a consequence of dysphagia.

Aspiration means food or fluids flowing into the trachea (and lungs) instead of going into the digestive system causing the individual to be at risk of chest infection and choking.



## WHO CAN SUFFER FROM DYSPHAGIA?

Dysphagia can be caused by diseases like stroke, Alzheimer's, head & neck cancer, Parkinson's or can be a medical condition associated with ageing.<sup>4</sup>

60% of frail elderly<sup>4</sup> 50–75% of care home residents<sup>5</sup>

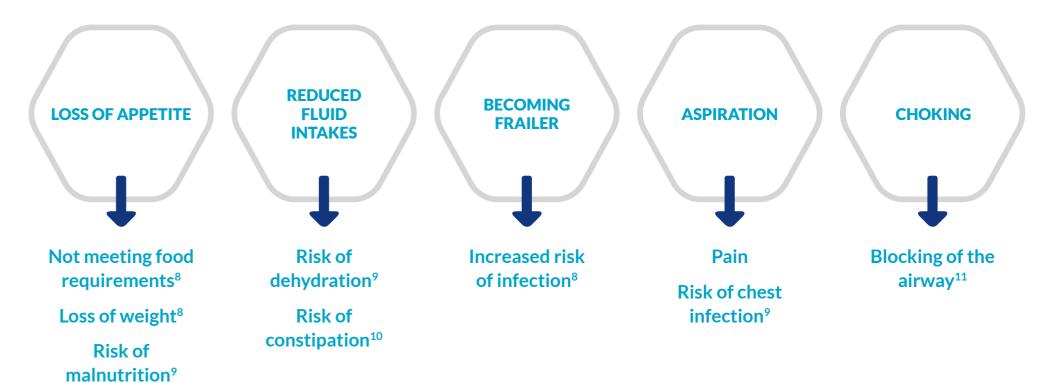
Up to 50% of head and neck cancer patients<sup>6</sup>



40%–78% of stroke patients<sup>7</sup> 52%–82% of Parkinson's patients<sup>4</sup> Up to 84% of Alzheimer's patients<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH DYSPHAGIA?

Individuals with swallowing difficulties are at risk of:



### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR PATIENTS/RESIDENTS?

Identify symptoms early and act.

### **DO THEY:**

- Drool/produce excessive saliva?
- Show difficulty in chewing?
- Show painful swallowing?
- Cough or choke during swallowing?
- Clear throat frequently?

- Show impaired breathing during meal times?
- Avoid eating in the company of others?
- Take a long time to eat or struggle to finish meals?
- Avoid food, play with food <u>or hold bolus in mouth?</u>
- Need help to eat or drink?

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR PATIENTS/RESIDENTS?

#### HAVE A TEAM APPROACH AND OBSERVE THE INDIVIDUAL

- Discuss with your colleagues
- Talk to the speech and language therapist
- Talk to the GP

#### FOLLOW THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST'S RECOMMENDATIONS

• Special diets and thickened drinks to specific consistencies

### SUPERVISE WHEN THEY EAT

- Assist them
- Monitor food and fluid intake
- <u>If safe to do so</u>, serve small quantities of drinks more often

### **THICKENER USE**

- Follow speech and language therapist's recommendations
- Follow recommended dosage instructions



#### VISIT THE NESTLÉ HEALTH SCIENCE N+ EDUCATION HUB FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES:

- Request N+ dysphagia training
- Nestlé Health Science sample service
- Downloadable resources and tools
- Case studies and clinical summaries
- Patient support materials
- Videos and webinars

#### Register: nestlehealthscience.co.uk/nplus

For more information, please contact your local Nestlé Health Science representative or call 00800 6887 4846

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	Resource® ThickenUp <sup>ow</sup> Clear is the only gum-based thickening agent supported by over 6 years of clinical experience and with 5 published studies <sup>1,5</sup>		
	We have worked with a number of our customers to create a suite of dysphagia case studies so they can share their learnings to help enhance your knowledge within this clinical area.		
	(*)		
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	Sandra Robinson, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist	Alison Smith RD, Prescribing Support Dietitian, Chiltern and Aylebury Valic Clinical Commissioning Groups	
	Read Case Study	Read Case Study	

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