**Most Common Symptoms Related to Dysphagia**

# **Dysphagia**

Dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing, is a condition where it takes more time and effort to move the liquid or solid food from the mouth down into the stomach. The degree of dysphagia may vary from mild discomfort to pain. In extreme cases, swallowing can even become impossible.

Occasional difficulty when eating too fast or swallowing big bolus without chewing well is usually not a cause for concern. However, if the symptoms persist, it might be an indicator of a serious underlying condition requiring medical treatment.

Although anyone can experience dysphagia, older adults are typically more susceptible to it. The underlying cause of dysphagia usually varies, and the treatment modality depends upon the proper diagnosis of the cause. Some of the commonly used techniques to assess dysphagia include Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES), Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS) and other forms of Instrumental Swallowing Assessment. However, FEES is most commonly used and its ergonomically designed and portable equipment is available at [PatCom Medical](https://www.patcommedical.com/swallowing-fees).

# **Symptoms in Adults**

In some cases, dysphagia and associated pathology may be asymptomatic. As a result, it may go undiagnosed and untreated for years leading to an increased risk of aspiration Pneumonia (lung infection following accidental inhalation of saliva and liquid and solid food particles).

Some of the common symptoms related to dysphagia include:

* Drooling
* Pain while swallowing (odynophagia)
* A feeling of fullness in the neck
* Regurgitation
* Hoarse voice
* Solid or liquid food items leaking from the nasal cavity
* Frequent heartburn
* Choking or coughing while swallowing
* Poor oral management
* Food particles persisting in the oral cavity after swallowing
* An inability to properly close the mouth leading to food and drink leaking from the mouth
* Difficulty to coordinate breathing and swallowing
* The feeling of something being stuck in the throat
* Weight loss without trying
* Malnutrition
* dehydration
* Difficulty in chewing solid food
* Extra effort and time spent on chewing and swallowing
* Recurrent aspiration pneumonia
* Having to cut food into smaller pieces
* Avoidance of certain food items

A few or many of these symptoms may be present in a patient, and the diagnosis is usually based on a confirmatory diagnostic test such as Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) or other types of Instrumental Swallowing Assessment such as MBSS.

## **Symptoms in Children**

In adults, the symptoms experienced can lead to a visit to the doctor and help establish a diagnosis. In children, however, it is more difficult to pinpoint the problem. The following signs and symptoms may act as an indicator, and diagnostic tests can be performed later to establish a conclusive diagnosis.

* Refusal to eat certain food items
* Regurgitation during meals
* Solid or liquid food leaking from the oral cavity
* Solid or liquid food leaking from the nasal cavity
* Difficulty breathing while swallowing

### **Diagnosis**

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should visit your healthcare provider. After an initial clinical assessment, you may be referred for specialized tests meant for the diagnosis of dysphagia. The test will confirm the underlying cause, which may be because of oral, oropharyngeal, or esophageal pathologies.

The diagnosis of the specific type of dysphagia will simplify the treatment, make it more effective, and decrease the likelihood of dysphagia associated complications, aspiration pneumonia being on the top.