

Dysphagia

Symptoms and diagnosis

What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia is a problem with swallowing and moving food and liquid from the mouth into the stomach. Some symptoms of dysphagia are:

- Coughing when eating or drinking, or soon after eating or drinking
- A wet, gurgly voice after drinking
- Feeling that food or pills stick in your throat

What problems happen with dysphagia?

People who have dysphagia often have problems with *aspiration*. This is when liquid or food goes into the *airway* (the tube that carries air to and from the lungs). *Silent aspiration* is when liquid or food goes into the airway, but there is no coughing or choking.

How is dysphagia diagnosed?

Your provider may ask you to have a barium swallow study to help diagnose your swallowing problems. This study may also be called a *video fluoroscopic swallow study*, or a *modified barium swallow study*. This study shows what happens to food or liquid when you swallow. It will help us understand your swallowing problems.

For the study:

- We will ask you to swallow a white liquid called *barium*. It will be thin or thick. We may ask you to swallow both kinds.
- A special kind of X-ray called *fluoroscopy* will create a video of your throat as you swallow. The barium makes it easier to see details on the X-ray.
- A speech pathologist and radiologist will study your X-ray video and give you the results. The provider who referred you for this study will also be able to see their report.



A speech pathologist and a radiologist will study the X-ray video of your throat.

You should not have any pain or discomfort from this test.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Speech Pathology:
206.597.3295