



Swallowing advice post botulinum toxin injection (into the larger neck muscles & salivary glands)

Dysphagia means difficulty in swallowing, which can occur following a botulinum toxin injection to the head and neck area.

It is important to recognise the symptoms of dysphagia as they can vary, and you may not experience all of them.

Symptoms to look out for when swallowing include:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Throat clearing
- Gagging
- Choking
- Food/fluid regurgitating back up
- Wet voice (like talking under water) or strained voice
- Laboured breathing after swallowing
- Eye watering or colour change in the face
- Throat irritation

Why is this a problem?

Difficulty in swallowing can be very distressing. In certain cases it can lead to weight loss, dehydration and cause a chest infection or pneumonia.

What to do if you have difficulty swallowing?

Firstly **contact your consultant** as soon as possible. They will refer you to a Speech and Language Therapist for assessment and advice for your dysphagia. **If you are unable to eat or drink anything at all or are having significant breathing difficulties please go to A&E or call 999.**

Whilst waiting to be seen by Speech and Language Therapy you may want to consider the below strategies:

- Taking small, steadily paced, sips of fluid or mouthfuls of diet
- Trying not to talk straight after or during eating or drinking
- Reduce distractions when eating and drinking
- If you are having difficulty taking tablets, you may want to try taking them with a spoonful of yoghurt or custard to help them go down more easily
- Make a diary of your difficulties and look for patterns of swallowing difficulty, i.e. does it happen on hot/cold drinks? Are particularly dry/crumbly/hard foods difficult?
- Does it happen first thing in the morning or when you are more tired?
- If a pattern emerges, and it is practical to do so, try and avoid those problem foods/drinks or situations that make the dysphagia worse.

Information for Patients

Contact details

Please contact your consultant medical secretary via switchboard on **0121 371 2000**

Speech and Language Therapy

Telephone: **0121 371 3483**

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

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