

# Welcome to Swallowing Day 2016!

## swallowing awareness day



Wednesday 11 May 2016



Knowledge of dysphagia and its implications remains largely unknown for most Australians. For this reason Speech Pathology Australia and its Board felt a designated day to promote the effects and management of dysphagia was warranted.

Swallowing Awareness Day 2016 is an opportunity to **bring attention** to swallowing disorders and to **connect people** with the professionals who can help.

Swallowing Awareness Day 2016 needs your help!

### Poster Print Out

Download each of the posters and display them in your practice in the lead up to and on Swallowing Day. Or, contact Speech Pathology Australia Publications Officer Rebecca Faltyn to receive the posters via email [pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:pubs@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

Print out the colouring in sheet and make it available to children in your practice

### Social Media

Engage on social media by using **#dysphagia** and **#900** and include

**@SpeechPathAus** in your Twitter and Instagram posts.

## How to use the logos!

Download the logos and include them in your email signature, facebook page and other material and help to spread the word about Swallowing Day.



[Download the logos](#)

# EVERYONE'S DOING IT... BUT NO ONE'S TALKING ABOUT IT.

Like breathing, **swallowing** is essential to everyday life. Humans swallow at least **900 times a day**: around **three times an hour** during sleep, **once per minute** while awake and **even more often** during meals.

Speech pathologists are the professionals who assess and treat people across the lifespan with dysphagia (difficulty swallowing).

To find a speech pathologist near you go to [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)



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# BUT NO ONE'S TALKING ABOUT IT.

Like breathing, swallowing is essential to everyday life. Humans swallow at least **900 times a day**: around **three times an hour during sleep**, **once per minute while awake** and **even more often during meals**.

People who have trouble swallowing are at risk of choking, poor nutrition and dehydration, while babies and children with difficulty feeding may not take in enough nutrients to support growth and brain development.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS WORK WITH THOUSANDS**

**OF AUSTRALIANS EACH YEAR WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING?**

Speech pathologists are the professionals who assess and treat people with dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) across the lifespan.

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# THE FACTS ON SWALLOWING DISORDERS - DYSPHAGIA

## FAST FACTS:

- Swallowing uses 26 muscles
- Humans swallow at least 900 times a day
- A swallowing problem can occur at any stage in life
- Swallowing skills develop from infancy
- Almost half of everyone who has had a stroke will have a swallowing problem.

**Like breathing, swallowing is essential to everyday life. Humans swallow at least 900 times a day: around three times an hour during sleep, once per minute while awake and even more often during meals. We swallow food, liquids, medicine and saliva. People who have trouble swallowing are at risk of poor nutrition and dehydration, while babies and children with difficulty feeding may not take in enough nutrients to support growth and brain development.**

The swallowing system is a tube in which a series of pumps and valves move food and drink from the mouth to the stomach.

In the throat, the tube branches in two directions; down one, the food and drinks pass into the oesophagus on their way to the stomach, while the other branches off to the voice box and lungs and is used for breathing.

With each swallow we hold our breath for around one second to make sure the food or drink travels down the correct tube to the stomach rather than the lungs.

Swallowing uses 26 muscles and many nerves to coordinate the split second timing needed to safely swallow. Mistimed movements can lead to food or drink 'going down the wrong way'.

Swallowing skills develop from infancy. Babies drink milk, from their mother's breast or a bottle, using muscles in their lips, tongue, jaw and cheeks. The infant holds the nipple at the back of their mouth and the milk triggers the swallow reflex.

When children start to eat solid food, they learn to move the food from the front of the mouth to the back to trigger the same swallowing reflex. Chewing is also important – food mixes with saliva and is broken into tiny pieces so that it forms a soft slippery ball that is easy to safely swallow.

Swallowing difficulty (dysphagia) is any problem with: sucking, swallowing, drinking, chewing, eating, controlling saliva, taking medication, or protecting the lungs from food and drink 'going

the wrong way'. It can be a problem with keeping the lips closed so that food, liquid or saliva doesn't dribble out.

Sometimes, the first sign of a swallowing problem is coughing, gagging or choking when eating and drinking. Swallowing problems can mean food, drinks or saliva gets into the lungs and this can cause lung infections (pneumonia).

Reflux is a problem where the valves in the oesophagus causes the contents of the stomach (like food, drink or stomach acid) to come back up, sometimes reaching as far up as the throat and mouth.

## WHO CAN HAVE A SWALLOWING PROBLEM?

A swallowing problem can occur at any stage in life. Babies born prematurely, those with heart defects or damage to the brain (e.g. cerebral palsy) often have swallowing problems. Children with abnormalities in the structures of the head, neck and face such as cleft lip or palate may also have difficulty feeding.

Adults may also develop swallowing problems as a result of damage to the brain or structures of the head and neck.

Almost half of everyone who has had a stroke will have a swallowing problem. People who have had a head injury, those with Parkinson's disease, motor neuron disease, dementia or cancer of the head and neck may also have swallowing problems.

[Download the fact sheet](#)



# WHAT'S THIS THING CALLED DYSPHAGIA?

## Dysphagia is difficulty swallowing

Like breathing, swallowing is essential to everyday life. Humans swallow at least **900 times a day**; around **three times an hour during sleep**, **once per minute while awake** and **even more often during meals**.

People who have trouble swallowing are at risk of choking, poor nutrition and dehydration, while babies and children with difficulty feeding may not take in enough nutrients to support growth and brain development.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS WORK WITH THOUSANDS**

**OF AUSTRALIANS EACH YEAR WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING?**

Speech pathologists work with families and individuals across the lifespan to ease the burden of dysphagia and help people regain their basic right to swallow.

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# DISCUSSING DYSPHAGIA



## LET'S TALK ABOUT SWALLOWING DISORDERS

Swallowing disorders, also known as dysphagia (*dis-fay-juh*), affect a person's ability to safely swallow drinks, food and medication.

Left untreated, swallowing disorders can have a devastating effect on a person's physical and emotional well-being.

**Speech pathologists are the professionals who assess and treat swallowing disorders.**

### How to know if you may have a swallowing disorder?

- Do you cough while eating or drinking?
- Do you have trouble swallowing tablets?
- Do you avoid social gatherings where food is offered?
- Is it challenging to feed yourself?
- Is it difficult to swallow your own saliva?

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