

Dysphagia

A medical term for any difficulty with swallowing, and is associated with a wide range of disabilities and health conditions.



The risks

People with disability, who have dysphagia, are more likely to die from choking or respiratory illnesses (or have serious health complications).

A regular comprehensive health assessment can help to identify health issues earlier.



The symptoms

Symptoms include:

- difficulty biting or chewing on food
- coughing or choking on food or fluid
- food or drink falling from a person's mouth.

These can worsen as people age.



Identification and prevention

Knowledge and training can help support workers identify dysphagia and prevent serious health complications. This includes:

- being able to identify early signs and symptoms
- supporting participant's to access a GP and speech pathologist
- getting a mealtime management plan
- assistance during mealtimes and regular medication reviews.



Mealtime management plans



GP & speech pathology assessment



Regular medication reviews

Managing risks

An accurate assessment of a participant's swallowing and nutritional needs can reduce the negative impacts of dysphagia and improve their safety and quality of life.



Find out more

For full details on this practice alert and the obligations for NDIS support workers, and access to other training and resources, please visit [ndiscommission.gov.au/workerresources](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workerresources)



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