

Dysphagia

Multiple Sclerosis

Depending on the progression of your MS, swallowing problems may occur. The medical term for this is called dysphagia. It's very important to talk with your doctor about any problems you may have swallowing. Your doctor will most likely refer you to a speech pathologist who will assess how well you are able to swallow. A speech pathologist can also give tips on different ways to swallow more safely based on how you breathe, sit, or prepare your food. To stay well-nourished and hydrated, below are some tips on ways to promote safe chewing and swallowing.

Small Bites are Key

Take small bites to prevent becoming overtired from chewing and to reduce the risk of choking.

Avoid Crunchy Foods

Avoid foods that crumble, such as chips, cookies, pretzels, crackers, and toast.

Use Moist Cooking Methods

Cook meats until tender by using moist cooking methods, like braising, stewing, or baking in liquid.

Add Liquids

Foods that are moist are much easier to chew and swallow. Depending on the type of food, try adding small amounts of gravy, sauce, vegetable juice, fruit juice, or milk.

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Aim For Soft Foods

Soft foods, like canned fruits, cooked vegetables, mashed potatoes, or stewed meats, are much easier to chew and swallow

Texture Matters

- Changing the texture of foods can make a big difference in how easy they are to swallow. Try solid foods that are blended, chopped, ground, or mashed.
 - Some people find they can drink liquids more easily if they are thickened. Commercial thickeners are available for this purpose. Talk to your pharmacist about thickener options. Other food possibilities include milk shakes, fruit sauces, sherbets, and puddings.
 - Try adding potato flakes to thicken liquid foods (soups, sauces, etc.) that may be too thin for your swallowing needs.
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Eat Regularly

Eat small, frequent meals so you aren't overly hungry at mealtimes. Being too hungry may cause you to eat more quickly and/or take larger bites.
