

Management of swallowing problem continued:

- Use straws and spoons to help you eat and drink more safely and comfortably
- Maintain exercise routine to help you strengthen your lips, tongue and throat muscles
- Include softer, moist foods, or thickening drinks and avoid hard, dry or crumbly foods
- Eat slowly while taking small bites to reduce the risk of coughing and choking
- Lower your chin towards your chest before you swallow to reduce the chance of food or drink going down into the lungs
- Make your bite size smaller. This will not only give you more control over your chewing and swallowing but will also reduce the risk of aspiration
- Avoid taking another bite unless you are confident that you have already swallowed all your food
- Take a breath in first, take small bite, close your lips, take your time to chew and then take a careful swallow. You may want to swallow one more time to make sure all the food or drink has gone.
- Try to concentrate and chew hard with all of the muscles in your mouth and throat while you swallow your food
- Make sure you refill a cup or glass when it is half empty, so you do not have to move your head back to drink. Modified cups allow you to drink without tilting your head.
- Adjust temperature and consistency of your food and drink. Ask your speech and language therapist will to assess you and advice on using powdered thickeners.
- Food should not be too hot. Eating soft food like jello, yogurt and applesauce that may be easier, swallowing at least twice for eating solids



DID YOU KNOW?

The number of Parkinson's patients will double by 2040. Millions of Parkinson's patients around the world are suffering from poverty and...

- Cannot afford to buy their medications
- Cannot afford to purchase a cane, walker, or a wheelchair
- Cannot obtain educational literature about Parkinson's in their language
- Are not able to afford consulting a neurologist and remain undiagnosed and untreated

OUR SERVICES

World Parkinson's Program is the only organization that provides the following unique services to Parkinson's patients:

- Parkinson's medications to those patients who can't afford to buy them
- Canes, walkers & wheelchairs to prevent falls
- Parkinson's educational brochures in many languages
- Free electronic educational newsletter
- Chapters of World Parkinson's Program in various parts of the world

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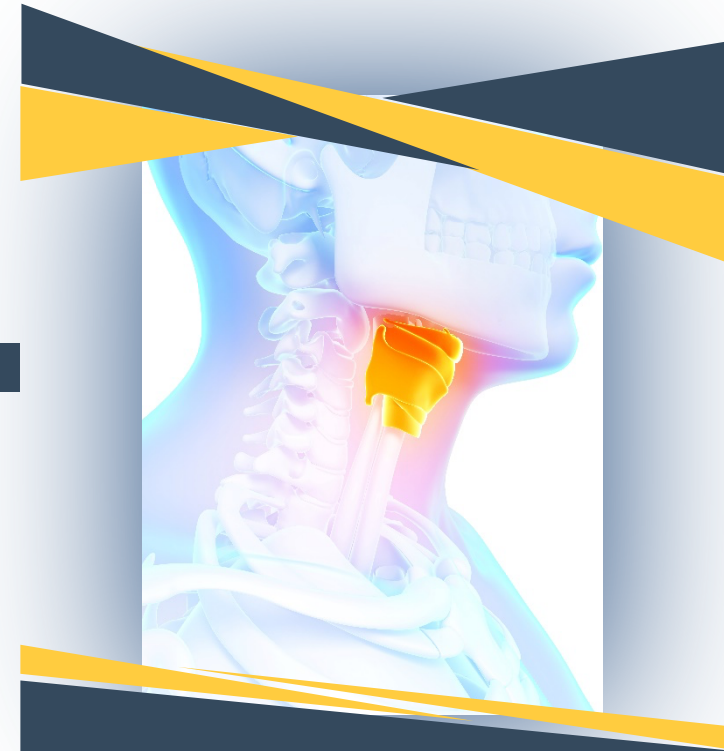
This information is not a substitute of medical advice. Consult your Physician before applying this information.

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Frequently asked questions about

SPEECH AND SWALLOWING IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE



ENGLISH – 21



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"Those who fight Parkinson's with knowledge always find solutions"- Dr. Rana

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative condition characterized by tremors, slowness of movements, stiffness, and balance problems. In addition, Parkinson's has many non-motor symptoms such as memory or cognitive issues, speech and swallowing problems, depression, and sleep difficulties. It affects almost 10 million individuals around the world.

HOW SPEECH PROBLEMS AFFECT PARKINSON'S PATIENTS?

As the disease progresses in Parkinson's patients about 60% of patients report to have problems with speech. Parkinson's patients may struggle during conversations. These changes bring about depressive symptoms, low morale along with reduced motivation to communicate.

These communication difficulties affect the individual's quality of life including social skills, lifestyle and emotional well-being. Their speech problems interfere with activities of daily living, such as visiting a bank teller or asking for assistance from a store clerk and thus, compromise independence. Patients are reluctant to participate in social engagements such as card games, family gatherings or going for dinner where they are expected to communicate and hold a conversation. Patients may isolate themselves to avoid social interactions. Speech become soft, monotonous and some patients start to experience hesitation when they begin to say a sentence.

ARE THERE ANY STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH SPEECH PROBLEMS?

In addition to speech therapy, individuals with Parkinson's disease may benefit from these general strategies:

- **Training to Breathe** before speaking. Breathe in fully before you speak so you do not run out of air before you finish the sentence

- **Maintain eye contact**
- **Establish a topic** before beginning a conversation
- **Rate of speech:** Keep it slow and even
- **Focus on lips and jaws:** Force your lips and jaw to work hard as you pronounce words
- **Concentrate** on finishing the sound of each word before starting the next
- **Reduce background noise:** Turn down the TV or radio if you have something to say
- **Try your best** to talk for yourself, even if it takes longer. Others might want to talk for you but try on your own. Sometimes it helps when someone talks for you, for example when you are tired, but YOU should decide when that is
- **On the phone:** Hold your head up straight and speak directly into the mouthpiece. Let your voice warm up by practicing a few words aloud before dialing or answering
- **Clear your mouth** of saliva regularly whilst talking
- **Daily deep breathing and relaxation exercises** and exercises of speech muscles, jaw and lips may be helpful
- **Head in an upright position:** Keeping the head in an upright position and giving more group speeches is also helpful
- **Help from friends and family:** Have your family and friends tell you when your voice drops. Talk about the problem with family and friends.
- Most of all, **RELAX**

ARE THERE ANY DEVICES AVAILABLE TO MAKE COMMUNICATION EASIER FOR PARKINSON'S PATIENTS?

Following are the devices to augment speech production, if the above strategies are not successful:

- Voice amplifier
- If you can write easily then use a notebook and

- If you cannot write easily, try a white board and letters of the alphabet to spell out words
- Using pacing board to make speech evenly spaced and decreasing rush in speech is helpful for people who speak very fast
- There is a small portable device available on which one can type and it would speak for the person, it could be rented from the clinics or the companies that make it

DO MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SWALLOWING PROBLEMS WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

Nearly half of Parkinson's disease patients experience swallowing problems as the disease progresses. Swallowing problems may result in choking or coughing with regular meals and can lead to food going into the wind pipe leading to lung infection known as aspiration Pneumonia. It can also result in poor intake of food leading to malnutrition and even dehydration in Parkinson's patients.

ARE THERE ANY TESTS AVAILABLE TO ASSESS SWALLOWING PROBLEMS?

As Parkinson's disease progresses, your doctor will ask about your swallowing difficulties, for example what happens when you try to swallow, or if it is different with different food consistencies? Doctor may also carry out oral examination and observe you as you take small mouthfuls of food or drink. If needed, you may be referred for further tests and swallowing studies to rule out other causes of swallowing problem.

HOW CAN THE SWALLOWING PROBLEM BE MANAGED?

Following your initial assessment your doctor might come up with a plan to help you. Few of these strategies are:

- Adjusting your posture while sitting and head posture when eating or drinking