

Swallowing Checklist

Questions to help you find out whether you have any swallowing problems. Swallowing abilities vary greatly among people with physical disabilities. Most are not aware that they have any problems or know the importance of a safe swallow on general health and wellbeing. Anyone with a physical disability is recommended to review this checklist.

Visit futurethinking.abilitycentre.com.au for more information.

Please note that this checklist is a guide only and should not replace a thorough assessment completed by health professionals.

Question	If you answer...	It is recommended you...
Have you reviewed the Cerebral Palsy Respiratory Checklist?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer the questions on the checklist. This is a research based checklist to assist find out your risk of respiratory problems and provides a guide of what you need to do. Although based on children and young adults with cerebral palsy, it is relevant as a guide for anyone with a physical disability at any age. www.abilitycentre.com.au/resources/cp-checklist
Do you cough when eating certain foods?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a swallow review so that you can enjoy foods safely. See your speech pathologist.
Do you cough when drinking fluids?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a swallow review so that you can enjoy drinks safely. See your speech pathologist.
Have you choked on food or fluids?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a swallow review so that you can eat and drink safely. Choking is very dangerous and needs to be taken very seriously. See your speech pathologist.

Swallowing Checklist cont.

Question	If you answer...	It is recommended you...
Have you had more than one chest infection requiring antibiotics or hospitalisation in the past?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a team approach to your respiratory management. • See your GP for full health review, ask whether a referral to a respiratory specialist is necessary. • See your speech pathologist for a swallow review. • See your physiotherapist for respiratory health management. • See your physiotherapist and occupational therapist for positioning and movement.
Do you have a history of respiratory disease?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a team approach to your respiratory management. • See your GP for a full health review, ask whether a referral to a respiratory specialist is necessary. • See your speech pathologist for a swallow review. • See your physiotherapist for respiratory health management. • See your physiotherapist and occupational therapist for positioning and movement.
After swallowing food or fluids, do you find it comes back up to your mouth?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out why this happens. • See your GP.
Do you find food or fluid comes back up out of your nose?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out why this happens. • See your GP.
Do you feel uncomfortable or burning in your chest after or during eating?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out why this happens. • See your GP.
Do you have any difficulties swallowing medications?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a way to swallow medications safely. • See your GP. • See your pharmacist to find out different ways the medication can be taken. • See your speech pathologist for a swallow review.

Swallowing Checklist cont.

Question	If you answer...	It is recommended you...
Have you had a change of medications which change your alertness?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss this with your GP, find out if a change in alertness is supposed to happen and what is recommended to help you. • See your speech pathologist for a review and strategies to help when you don't feel as alert.
Do you have the texture of your food modified?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow recommended textures and have your swallow reviewed regularly. • See your speech pathologist.
Do you have your fluids thickened?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow recommended thickened fluids and have your swallow reviewed regularly. • See your speech pathologist.
Do your medications need to be crushed for you to swallow?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your pharmacist that the medications can be safely crushed. Some medicines absorb at different rates so it is important to know whether you can crush a medicine or not. • See your GP to make sure the medicines are right for you if they can't be crushed. • See your speech pathologist for a swallow review.
If you have your fluids thickened, do you crush your medications?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your pharmacist that the medications can be crushed into foods like yoghurt or custard. • See your GP if the medicine cannot be crushed. • See your speech pathologist.
If you have your fluids thickened, do you take any anti-epileptic medications?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your neurologist or GP and pharmacist that the medications do not interact with the thickener you use. • See your speech pathologist.
If you have your fluids thickened, do you take any medications that need to be taken with a full glass of water?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your GP and pharmacist to find out how to safely take your medications. • See your speech pathologist.

Swallowing Checklist cont.

Question	If you answer...	It is recommended you...
Are you on medication for reflux?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have regular reviews with your GP to monitor the reflux.
Do you find it difficult to drink enough fluids throughout the day?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to drink enough fluid every day. See your GP and dietitian for ways to help get enough fluid each day.
Do you find you lose fluids from your mouth when drinking and have wet clothing?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to help you manage this so that you are comfortable. See your speech pathologist.
Do you avoid any foods because they are difficult to chew?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to make sure you get a balanced diet. See your speech pathologist. See your dietitian for food recommendations.
Is it difficult to swallow your saliva and control drooling?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to help you manage this so that you are comfortable. See your speech pathologist.
Have you lost or gained weight and do you need to monitor your weight?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to stay in a healthy weight range. See your GP for a health review. See your dietitian for food recommendations. See your speech pathologist for a swallow review.
Are you underweight?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to increase your weight to a healthy weight range. See your dietitian for food recommendations. See your speech pathologist for a swallow review.
Do you take nutritional supplements?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to have a balanced diet and take the right amount of nutritional supplements for your needs. See your dietitian for monitoring.

Swallowing Checklist cont.

Question	If you answer...	It is recommended you...
Do you have any concerns about your teeth or trouble brushing your teeth?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look after your teeth. Find ways to brush properly. See your dentist regularly. See your speech pathologist and occupational therapist.
Do you have difficulty using your usual cutlery and cups?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find cutlery and cups that work for you. See your occupational therapist.
Does it take longer to eat than usual?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to have a balanced diet regardless of how long you take to eat. See your speech pathologist for swallow review. See your dietitian for food recommendations. See your GP for health review.
Do you avoid eating when out in the community?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to help you manage this so that you are comfortable. See your speech pathologist.
Are you comfortable in your seating position when having meals and drinking fluids?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to be comfortable in your seat so that you can safely swallow and can enjoy your meals. See your speech pathologist, occupational therapist and physiotherapist for a seating review.
Do you eat and drink a variety of foods and fluids?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to have a balanced diet. See your speech pathologist for swallow review. See your dietitian for food recommendations. See your GP for a health review.
Have you had a loss of appetite?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find ways to have a balanced diet. See your GP for a health review. See your dietitian and speech pathologist for review.