

Signs of Dysphagia



© 2019 Eating with Dignity. All Rights Reserved

Signs and symptoms of dysphagia may include:

- Pain while swallowing
- Being unable to swallow
- Having the sensation of food getting stuck in the throat
- Drooling
- Bringing food back (regurgitation)
- Having frequent heartburn
- Unexpected weight loss
- Coughing or gagging when swallowing
- Having to cut food in smaller pieces to swallow
- Avoiding certain foods because of fear of choking
- Recurring chest infection
- Wet or gurgly voice quality

If dysphagia symptoms are frequent then the sufferer might avoid eating and/or drinking through **fear of choking**. Complications of dysphagia may include **malnutrition** and **dehydration**; it can affect quality of life as it often impacts enjoyment of meals and social occasions.

Dysphagia can be improved with **treatment** although a cure cannot always be possible. In some cases it can lead to complications such as aspiration pneumonia:

Aspiration Pneumonia is a chest infection that can develop after inhaling food or fluid. It can cause irritation or damage to the lungs.

Signs and symptoms of aspiration pneumonia may include:

- **Coughing** – this may be a dry cough or may produce phlegm that's yellow, green, brown or bloodstained
- **High Temperature** of 38 °C or above
- **Chest pain**
- **Difficulty breathing** – breathing may be rapid and shallow even at rest

The above symptoms can range from mild-severe; it is important to seek professional assessment and treatment if any of these symptoms are noticed.