Tips for Chewing and Swallowing Problems

You may have trouble swallowing due to loss of control of your mouth and throat muscles. As a result, chewing and managing solid foods can be difficult. If you have difficulty chewing or swallowing, there are several things you can do to make eating and drinking easier and safer.

1) Choose soft moist foods such as:
   - Scrambled eggs
   - Macaroni and cheese
   - Soups and stews
   - Ice Cream, custard and puddings
   - Mashed potatoes with gravy
   - Cooked cereal without lumps
   - Yogurt or gelatin made with soft canned fruit
   - Cooked vegetables
   - Cottage cheese

2) Chop, puree or blenderize foods you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.

3) Add gravy, sauces, broth, butter, margarine, mayonnaise or sour cream to soften and moisten foods.

4) Cut food into small bites.

5) Soften hard foods such as toast by dunking it into milk, cocoa, coffee or tea.

6) Keep mealtime relaxed.

7) Sit as upright as possible when you eat.

8) Do not talk and swallow at the same time.

9) Take small bites, less than 1 teaspoon per bite of food. Chew well and swallow your food before taking another bite.

10) Take a sip of beverage after each bite of food.

11) Do not try to wash down solids with sips of liquids, unless your speech or swallowing therapist instructs you to do so.

12) Drink 8 cups of fluid each day, unless you are on a fluid restriction or you have difficulty swallowing water or other thin liquids. If you require thickened liquids, follow recommendations for the appropriate thickness.

13) Contact your healthcare provider, dietitian or speech pathologist if your swallowing worsens, you cough when eating or drinking solids and/or liquids or losing weight.