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# Tips for Safer Chewing and Swallowing

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If you have difficulty chewing and/or swallowing, here are several things you can do to make eating and drinking easier and safer.

- Choose soft, moist foods such as:
  - Beans and legumes
  - Canned, well-cooked, soft fruits and vegetables
  - Cooked cereal without lumps like oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, or Malt-o-Meal
  - Ice cream, custard, and pudding
  - Macaroni and cheese
  - Mashed potatoes and gravy
  - Scrambled eggs
  - Soft cheeses like cottage cheese or ricotta
  - Soups and stews
  - Yogurt or gelatin made with canned fruit
- Cut, chop, puree, or blenderize foods you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.
- Chop meats into small pieces. Try cooking meats in a slow cooker or pressure cooker with liquids, such as broth.
- Add gravy, sauces, broth, butter, margarine, mayonnaise, or sour cream to soften and moisten foods.
- Soften hard foods, such as bread, crackers, or cereal, by soaking in milk, hot cocoa, coffee, or tea.
- Cut food into small bites and eat slowly. Chew well and swallow your food before taking another bite.
- Keep mealtimes relaxed.
- Sit as upright as possible when you eat and remain that way 2 hours after the meal.
- Do not talk and swallow at the same time.
- Take a small sip of liquid after each bite of food, but do not try to wash down solids with sips of liquids. Be sure to follow any guidelines provided during speech therapy.
- Contact your Healthcare Provider, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, or Speech Language Pathologist if your swallowing gets worse, if you cough when eating or drinking, or if you are losing weight.