



Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center

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Swallowing Disorders

Difficulty swallowing is a medical diagnosis called dysphagia (dis-fay-ja). This can occur at any age and may be due to:

- stroke—especially brain stem strokes
- head or neck trauma
- recent history of endotracheal intubation
- infectious disease or allergic reaction.

Chronic dysphagia may be associated with conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, multi-infarct dementia, developmental delay, Down's syndrome, or neurogenic diseases such as ALS, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease or multiple sclerosis.

Dysphagia may create aspiration where food or fluids enter the trachea and lungs. If an aspirated food particle is especially large, the potential for immediate, life threatening obstruction of the airway exists. If other food materials are aspirated, such as fluids or small food particles, the concern is not obstruction of the airway, but rather infection that can develop. Other symptoms associated with dysphagia include weight loss, dehydration, malnutrition, failure to thrive or social withdrawal.

Do you?

- Cough/choke when you eat?
- Cough when drinking liquids?
- Feel like something is stuck in your throat?

If you answer yes to any of these questions you may benefit from a swallowing study. At Banner Good Samaritan, our Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) are trained to assess dysphagia using Modified Barium Swallow (MBS) study or a Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES).

The MBS, also known as video-fluoroscopic swallow study, is considered the gold standard procedure for the

assessment of dysphagia in patients of all ages. This test is a video X-ray of your swallowing. The MBS is completed in collaboration with a radiologist and a speech-language pathologist. It helps to rule out aspiration and assess your swallow function. The SLP directs the order and sequence of food and liquid trials given during the exam as well as any treatment techniques or behavioral/ postural changes. The SLP who performs the study will try a variety of different textures and consistencies in order to reach valid conclusions about the state of a patient's swallowing. The radiologist operates the fluoroscopy equipment, verifies the presence or absence of aspiration, and often discusses the swallow study with the speech pathologist.

FEES is a diagnostic procedure performed by SLPs who have received specific training in endoscopy. FEES allows the speech language pathologist to examine tissue integrity, muscular function and laryngeal/pharyngeal secretions with increased acuity. FEES is also used as a therapy tool for training a person with dysphagia to use swallowing strategies that reduce aspiration risk and providing feedback to both the individual with dysphagia and their caregivers. Using FEES, reassessment of swallowing can be completed as needed when determining the need for diet modification or change in the swallowing treatment program. The patient is evaluated in a comfortable seating position.

How do I schedule a test?

Your physician's office must submit a written prescription documenting the procedure and the diagnosis. A prescription form can be obtained by calling (602) 640-3131 (MBS) or (602) 839-2174 (FEES). The physician's office may also need to obtain insurance authorization for patients. Our scheduling staff will contact you to schedule an appointment date/time.