

# Swallowing Difficulties

Swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) can be challenging for Residents and families. At Park Place Seniors Living, we are committed to supporting you with understanding, respect, and practical solutions. Our approach is guided by Resident and family centred care principles, ensuring your voice and choice are honored with dignity and empathy.

## WHAT IS DYSPHAGIA?

Dysphagia means having trouble chewing or swallowing food and drinks. It can be caused by physical changes, medical conditions, or nervous system problems. When swallowing is difficult, there is a higher risk of food or liquid entering the windpipe, which can lead to coughing or infection (aspiration). Our care team is here to help you eat safely and comfortably.



## OUR MISSION:

Park Place Seniors Living strives to provide enriched life experiences to seniors through innovation and creativity.

## OUR VISION:

At Park Place Seniors Living we are known for our unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of those we serve by providing a voice and a choice with dignity, respect and empathy.

Park Place Seniors Living | 1656 West 75 Ave, Vancouver  
[parkplaceseniorsliving.com](http://parkplaceseniorsliving.com)

#7

# Swallowing Difficulties



# Signs of Swallowing Difficulty

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DYSPHAGIA WHEN EATING?

Watch for these signs during meals:

- Coughing or throat clearing
- Fluid leaking from the mouth
- Keeping food in the cheeks (pocketing)
- Waiting a long time before swallowing
- Decreased chewing

## FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods may be harder to swallow and should be avoided if recommended by your care team:

- Dry or crumbly foods: crackers, rice, toast, bread, popcorn, cookies
- Sticky or stringy foods: spinach, peanut butter
- Thin fluids: coffee, tea, water, milk, juice, broth, Jello, ice cream (if thickened fluids are recommended)
- Small or hard pieces: raw vegetables, raw fruit, grapes, corn, peas, hard candies, chocolate, chips, gum

# Safe Eating

To help reduce the risk of choking or aspiration, the following interventions may be recommended:

- 1** Sit upright during meals and remain upright for 30 minutes afterward
- 2** Eat slowly and take small bites (use a teaspoon if needed)
- 3** Make sure your mouth is empty before taking another bite
- 4** Choose soft, moist foods without lumps
- 5** Blend foods with mixed textures if needed (e.g., soups)
- 6** Wear well-fitting dentures during meals

Let our care team know if you notice any signs of swallowing difficulty.

*Reviewed by a group of Park Place Family Representatives*

# How We Support You

Our interdisciplinary team—including nurses, dietitians, and family representatives—will work with you to assess your needs and adjust your meals for safety and comfort. Nutrition assessments are completed in accordance with provincial legislation and best practices.

We encourage you to ask questions and share concerns. Your feedback helps us provide the best possible care.

