

# Feeding and Swallowing

A **swallowing disorder**, also known as dysphagia (*dis-fay-juh*), is a difficulty or inability to swallow.

Left untreated, swallowing disorders can cause serious health issues, child and family stress, social difficulties and even life-threatening situations.



This checklist may help identify a swallowing disorder:



Speech-language pathologists have expertise in feeding and swallowing disorders. If you are concerned about a child's ability to chew and swallow, please consult your physician and a speech-language pathologist.

To find a speech-language pathologist specializing in swallowing disorders in your area, please visit [www.communicationhealth.ca](http://www.communicationhealth.ca).

- My baby frequently cries while breastfeeding.
- My baby drools a lot while drinking from a bottle or while breastfed.
- My baby has difficulty breathing or sounds congested after feedings.
- My baby or child is not gaining weight as expected.
- My child coughs frequently while eating and drinking.
- My child is unable to swallow age-appropriate forms of food.
- My child does not show any interest in food at all.
- My child is a very slow eater requiring more than 30 minutes for each meal most of the time.
- My child has been treated for pneumonia more than once in the past year.
- Mealtimes are not easy, fun or rewarding and are frustrating for me and my child.