

EATING, SWALLOWING AND PARKINSON'S DISEASE



Changes in speaking, chewing, controlling saliva and swallowing are common in Parkinson's disease (PD). These changes can affect important parts of life, such as the ability to eat, and people with PD can feel embarrassed about eating in front of other people. PD can affect the muscles in your jaw, face and tongue, making it harder to chew and swallow. You might notice yourself drooling or choking on food. Choking is dangerous, but there are ways to help you swallow and eat safely.

SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- drooling
- can't clear food from the mouth
- a gurgly voice
- coughing when eating/drinking
- choking on food/liquid/saliva
- problems swallowing medication
- pain when swallowing
- discomfort in chest/throat



These can lead to long-term problems:

- not eating/drinking enough – malnutrition/dehydration
- loss of appetite
- being unable to eat certain foods
- heartburn/reflux
- chest infection caused by food entering lungs
- food blocking airways



TIPS TO HELP YOU EAT AND DRINK

- Make sure you sit upright in a chair when eating or drinking, not slouched on the sofa
- Before swallowing, lower your chin towards your chest so the food doesn't go into your lungs
- Do exercises to strengthen your lips, tongue and throat muscles
- Change your diet to make it easier and safer to swallow food/drink – eat more moist or soft foods
- Slow down when you are eating, take time to swallow and swallow deliberately
- Take small mouthfuls, don't put too much food in your mouth
- Make sure you have cleared your mouth before taking another mouthful
- Reduce distractions when eating, like the TV or radio
- Refill your cup when it is half empty so you don't need to tilt your head back to drink
- Drink cold liquids before eating to help you swallow



Join a local support group to learn more and meet other people with Parkinson's disease:

Nairobi: 0722722090

Mombasa: 0707564733

Kisumu: 0710884431

For more information about Parkinson's disease visit:

www.parkinsonkenya.wixsite.com/website

OR

www.parkinsonsafrica.com



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