

Bulbar Features Swallowing

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Swallowing

- Two thirds of people with MND will experience difficulty swallowing
- Eat and drink less
- Food avoidance
- Reduced intake



Effects

- Weight loss
- Tiredness and loss of strength
- Constipation
- Loose, dry and flaky skin
- Risk of developing pressure sores

Aspiration leading to chest infections (called aspiration)

- Accelerates the disease
- Emotional burden



Supporting nutrition

Team effort

- Speech and language therapist - safe swallow
- Dietitian - diet and enrichment
- Occupational therapist - equipment for food preparation/eating
- Physiotherapist - posture, dealing with any experience of choking



Supporting meals

- Ensure good fluid intake
- Small meals
- Make food look and smell appetising
- Incorporate food preferences
- Keep food warm or reheat
- Relaxed, quiet environment



Gastrostomy

- Thin feeding tube inserted into the stomach through the abdomen
- All nutrition and hydration needs
- 'Top up' to maintain social eating
- The tube must be kept clean and clear
- Daily activities unaffected
- Time critical
- Discuss pros and cons to enable the individual to make an informed choice



Saliva problems

- Thick or thin saliva
- Posture
- Medication



Further information

- Managing saliva problems in MND
<https://www.mndassociation.org/app/uploads/information-sheet-p3-managing-saliva-problems.pdf>
- Dysphagia in MND
<https://www.mndassociation.org/app/uploads/information-sheet-p8-dysphagia-in-motor-neurone-disease.pdf>

