



The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist with Huntington's Disease Patients

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Points of Interest

- ▶ Dysphagia management for patients with Huntington's Disease (HD).
- ▶ Assisting with communication skills to make wants/needs known.
- ▶ Identifying cognitive deficits in patients with HD.
- ▶ The Speech-Language Pathologist as an interdisciplinary team member for the HD patient.

Speech-Language Pathologist

- ▶ Speech–Language Pathologist(SLP) works to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive- communication, and swallowing disorders in children and adults, as defined by American Speech-Language Association (ASHA).

REFFERAL

- ▶ Receipt of information
- ▶ Identify risk factors
- ▶ Discussion of management
- ▶ Build relationships

Types of Evaluations

- ▶ Swallowing
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Cognitive

BEDSIDE SWALLOW EVALUATION

- **A BEDSIDE SWALLOW EVALUATION IS COMPLETED TO IDENTIFY, IF YOU HAVE DYSPHAGIA. DYSPHAGIA IS THE MEDICAL TERM USED TO DESCRIBE DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING.**



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Postures to Enhance Safe Eating

- Sit as close to table as possible-place elbows on the table to stabilize the upper body.
- Place a pillow or wedge cushion at the back to support the body to stay forward.
- Be sure feet are flat on the floor, or place a box or stool under the feet for support.



Strategy: Pay attention to texture

- **Particulates:** little pieces of food or foods that break into particles/pieces in the mouth. *ie: peanuts, rice, popcorn, peanut M & M's, corn*
- **Crunchy:** raw vegetables like carrots, broccoli, apples, some crackers or chips
- **Chewy:** might be difficult to chew it completely. *ie., dense breads/bagels, dense meat like steak or pork chops*
- **Stringy:** celery, lettuce, pineapple, fruit with skins like grapes or apples



Strategy: Diet modifications

- Eliminate certain foods from the diet
- Change from a Regular diet to a Soft diet
 - Cut meats into small pieces
 - Grind and moisten meats
 - Cook all vegetables
 - Limited options with fresh fruit
 - Introduce canned fruit, applesauce, baked fruit

Strategy: Diet Modifications in Later Stages

- Transition from a Soft diet to a Ground or Pureed diet
 - Dysphagia Diet - Levels 1, 2, 3 may be recommended by a Speech Pathologist
 - People with HD will have increased dependence on others for assistance with feeding
 - Might be a struggle to get enough calories each day
 - Supplements, high calorie shakes, 1000 Calorie Shake, Super Cereal, etc. can help





Alternate Means of Nutrition

Indications

- Tube feeding is used when someone is unable to consume an adequate amount of food.
- Tube feeding can be used as a supplement to oral intake of foods and/or fluids, or as a sole means of providing nutrition.
- Tube feeding can be used on a temporary basis, when a medical condition does not allow the person to eat normally

Talk to your loved one and a medical professional about the different options before they become necessary.



A pastry cutter or potato masher



A blender and/or food processor



Dishes with sides



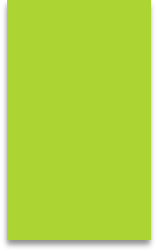
A “keep warm” dish



Sports Cups



Utensils with larger handles

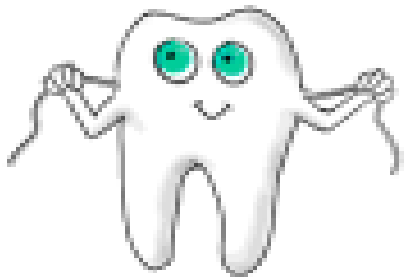


Swallow Strategies

- POSITIONING
- BOLUS SIZE
- RATE OF SPEED
- UTENSILS/DEVICES
- ENVIRONMENT
- LEVEL OF SUPERVISION

Dental Care

- See your dentist regularly
- Brush after meals and snacks
- Remember to floss
- Talk to your dentist about special issues and problems like dry mouth.



Key Points

- ✓ See a Speech Pathologist (SLP) for a baseline exam and tips/ strategies for safe swallowing
- ✓ See an Occupational Therapist for ideas for adaptive equipment
- ✓ Look out for signs of trouble swallowing
- ✓ Changing the texture of the food can help.
- ✓ Tube feeding can be an option when someone is unable to consume an adequate amount of food, as well as in other situations like medical crises.

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Communication Evaluation

COMMUNICATION IS
THE IMPARTING OR
INTERCHANGE OF
THOUGHTS, OPINIONS,
OR INFORMATION BY
SPEECH, WRITING, OR
SIGNS.



Dysarthria

A speech disorder caused by muscle weakness. It can make it hard for you to talk. People may have trouble understanding what you say.

Characteristics

- A. SLURRED SPEECH WITH POOR SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY
- B. IMPAIRED LIP AND TONGUE POSTURING
- C. DISCOORDINATION OF MOVEMENTS
- D. DECREASED RESPIRATORY CONTROL FOR VOCAL LOUDNESS AND SUSTAINED PHONATION

Treatment

1. ORAL MOTOR EXERCISES TO INCREASE ROM/ STRENGTH/ COORDINATION
2. BREATHING EXERCISES
3. COGNITIVE DEFICITS MAY LEAD TREATMENT TOWARDS AWARENESS, SELF MONITORING AND IMPULSIVITY
4. USE OF AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE

Cognitive Evaluation

- COGNITION IS THE MENTAL ACTION OR PROCESS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THOUGHT, EXPERIENCE, AND THE SENSES

Domains of Cognitive Skills

- ▶ Attention
- ▶ Memory
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Reasoning
- ▶ Executive Function
- ▶ Visuospatial Function

Strategies to Assist with Cognitive Function

1. SPEAK SLOWLY, CONCISE, AND CLEAR.
2. ALLOW TIME TO RESPOND.
3. ASK SHORT MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS.
4. ASK YES/NO QUESTIONS
5. IDENTIFY NON VERBAL BEHAVIORS AS CUES TO NEEDS.
6. ANTICIPATE NEEDS.

Resources

Amazon.com

- For keep warm dishes

Dentist.com

- For Dr. Barmans and other adaptive toothbrushes

For More Information

Huntington's Disease Society of America

Website: www.hdsa.org

E-mail: hdsainfo@hdsa.org

National Helpline: (888)HDSA-506

References

- ▶ Cassidy, J., Imbriglio, S., and Cerrillo, L. (2007). A Primer for Speech-Language Pathologists Managing Clients with Huntington's Disease in a Residential Care Facility. *Perspectives on Gerontology, 12(1)*, 22-26.
- ▶ Hamilton, A., Heemskerk, A.-W., et al. (2012). Oral Feeding in Huntington's Disease. A Guideline Document For Speech and Language Therapists. *Neurogegen. Dis. Manage. 2(1)*, 45-53.

References

HDSA Family Guide Series: Nutrition & HD

Available at www.hdsa.org/publications

We Are HDSA: February 2012 (eating well with HD);
May 2011 (Food Away from Home)

Available at: <http://www.hdsa.org/articleconnect>

EHDN Guidelines (Nutrition, oral feeding, oral
healthcare) Available at:

<http://www.hdsa.org/ehdnpubs>