

Signs of dysphagia checklist



Speech pathologist, Wendy Forster says Aged Care Chefs can identify signs of dysphagia in their residents through simple observation.

Any of the following symptoms can be an indication that a resident is developing swallowing difficulties:

Leaving food uneaten on a plate, especially more textured food such as meat

Unexplained weight loss

Recurring chest infections

Coughing while eating or drinking, eyes watering a little

Slow eating, moving food around or 'pocketing food' in the mouth, or stopping suddenly mid-mouthful

Inefficient swallowing, needing multiple attempts

Drooling gurgling voice

Vomiting after eating

Slurred speech as the same muscles used for swallowing are used for speech

If any one of these signs are present, a speech pathologist needs to do a dysphagia assessment.

A qualified speech pathologist can determine if a resident requires a texture-modified diet, or if the symptoms are due to other reasons.

The speech pathologist will advise which level of texture modification is right for the individual.

Checklist by Wendy Forster, BApsc, Speech Pathology, CPSP. Adult Speech Pathology, SA.