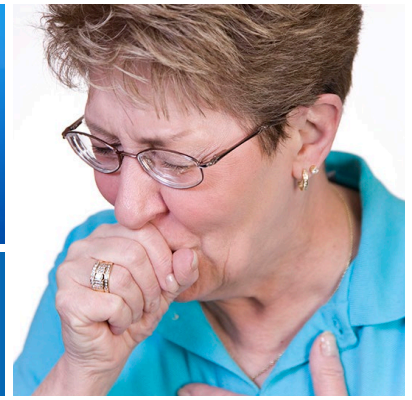


Detecting problems with swallowing



After a stroke or with some neurological diseases, you may have problems swallowing. This means you would have trouble eating, drinking, or taking medication. This sheet describes the test that is used to check for this.

What is this test for?

The test is used to:

- check if you have difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- refer you quickly to the care staff who can help you

Difficulty with swallowing can cause a variety of health problems, such as not having enough water in the body (dehydration), not eating properly, lung infection (pneumonia), and so on.

When do I need to be tested?

- > If you have had a stroke, the test will be done within 4 hours of your arrival at the hospital. If no problem is found, it might be done again. This will depend on how your condition is progressing.
- > If you have a neurological disease, the test could be done if the health care team has concerns about your ability to swallow.

Are there any precautions to take before the test?

If you wear glasses, hearing aids or dentures, it is best to carry them with you.

How does the test work?

1st step

The nurse checks:

- that you're awake and breathing well
- that your voice is clear
- that your throat isn't filled with secretions
- whether you've ever had problems swallowing in the past



2nd step

The nurse:

- makes sure you're sitting upright
- examines the inside of your mouth
- if necessary, cleans your mouth

3rd step

The nurse makes you swallow, in the following order:

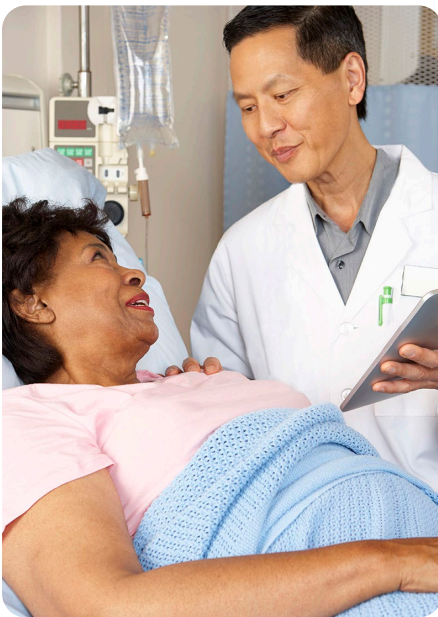
- a spoonful of applesauce
- water from a glass
- water through a straw



The nurse observes how you swallow each time. The test stops as soon as the nurse sees that you have any trouble swallowing. This means it's possible that you might not be asked to drink water.

What happens after the test?

- > If you have no difficulty swallowing
 - You will be able to eat and drink, according to the instructions of the health care team.
- > If the test showed you have difficulty swallowing
 - You will then have to fast until you're tested again. You'll see other specialists (speech pathologist, nutritionist, and occupational therapist). They will observe your ability to swallow and assess your needs to feed yourself properly. Then they will give you advice tailored to your situation and your preferences.
 - The results will be communicated to your doctor.



Who can I contact for help or questions?

If you have any questions about this test, don't hesitate to talk to your nurse.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



NOTEPAD



Questions



Resource people and contacts

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
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