



Choking: A Medical Emergency

Swift Action is Essential to
Prevent Irreversible Harm or Death!



1. Identify what choking is.
2. Identify risk factors that may lead to choking.
3. Identify steps to prevent choking.
4. Identify what to do if someone is choking.
5. Identify what can occur after a choking incident.

How Do We Eat?



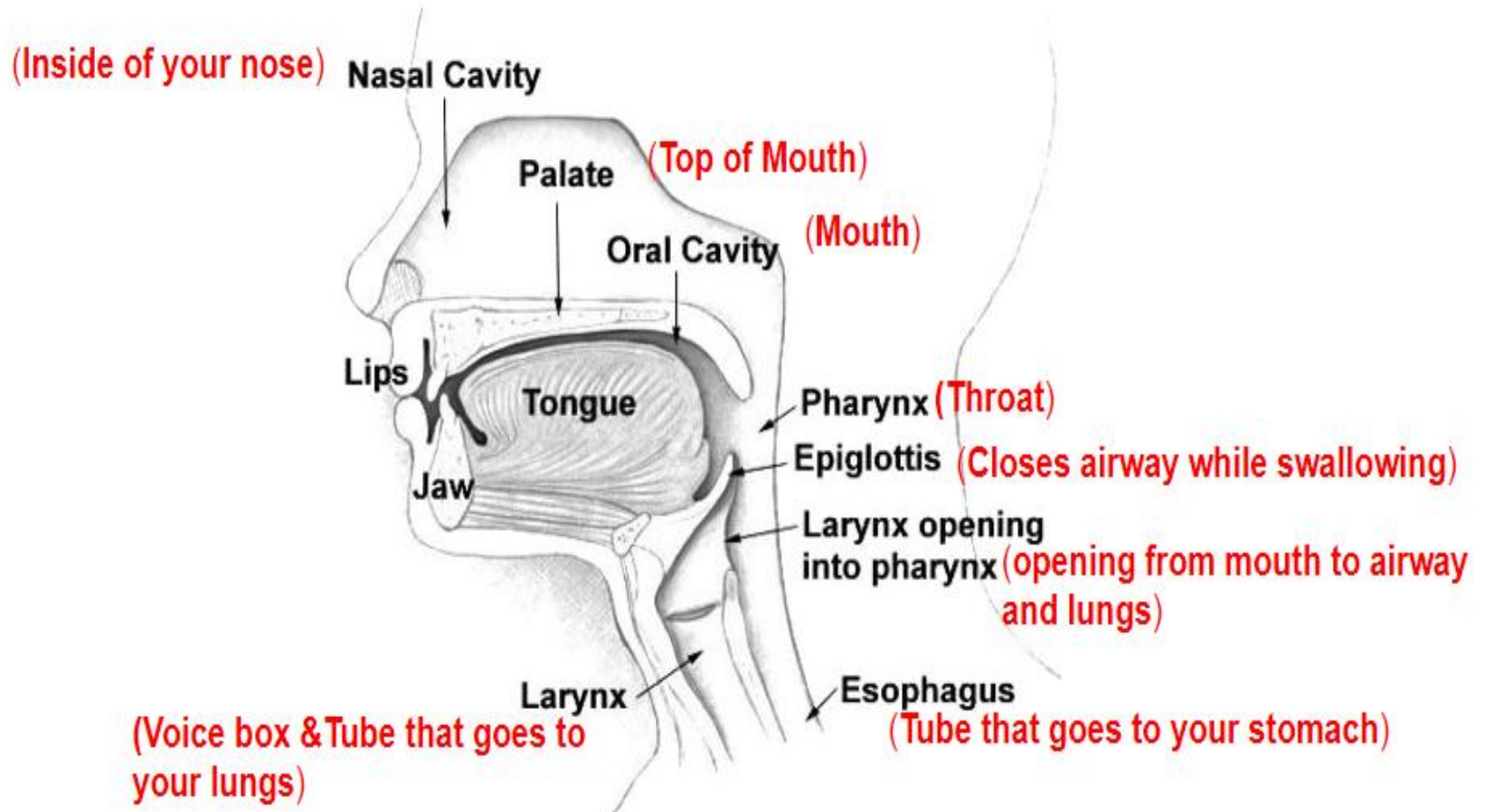
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Parts of Your Body Involved in Eating



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National Cancer Institute Seer Training Modules: Head and Neck Overview

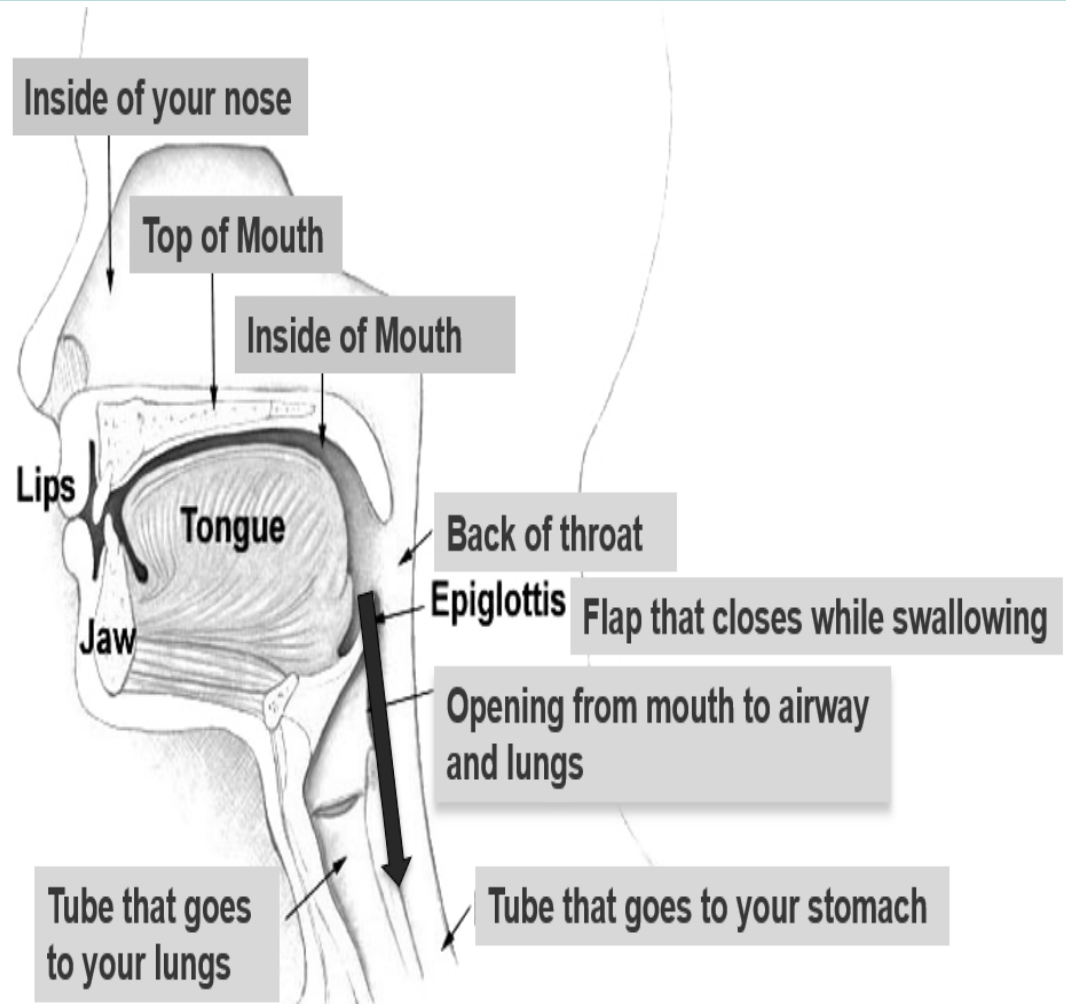
Normal Swallowing



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How Food Should Travel from your Mouth to your Stomach.

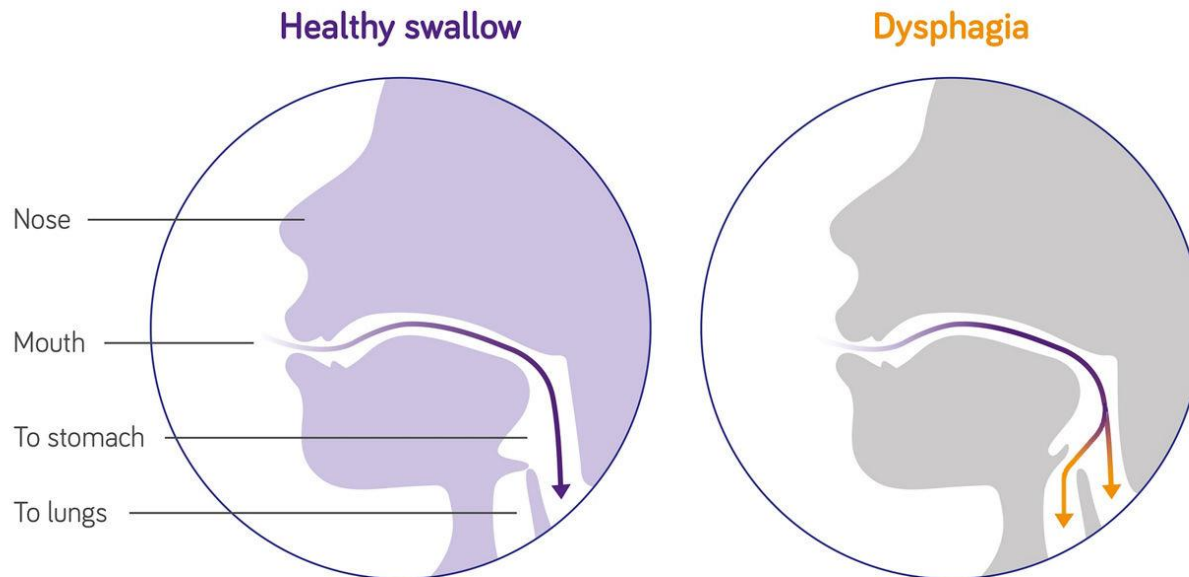
- Food enters your mouth and travels to the back of your throat.
- The epiglottis flap closes your breathing tube leading to your lungs.
- The food travels down the tube to your stomach.





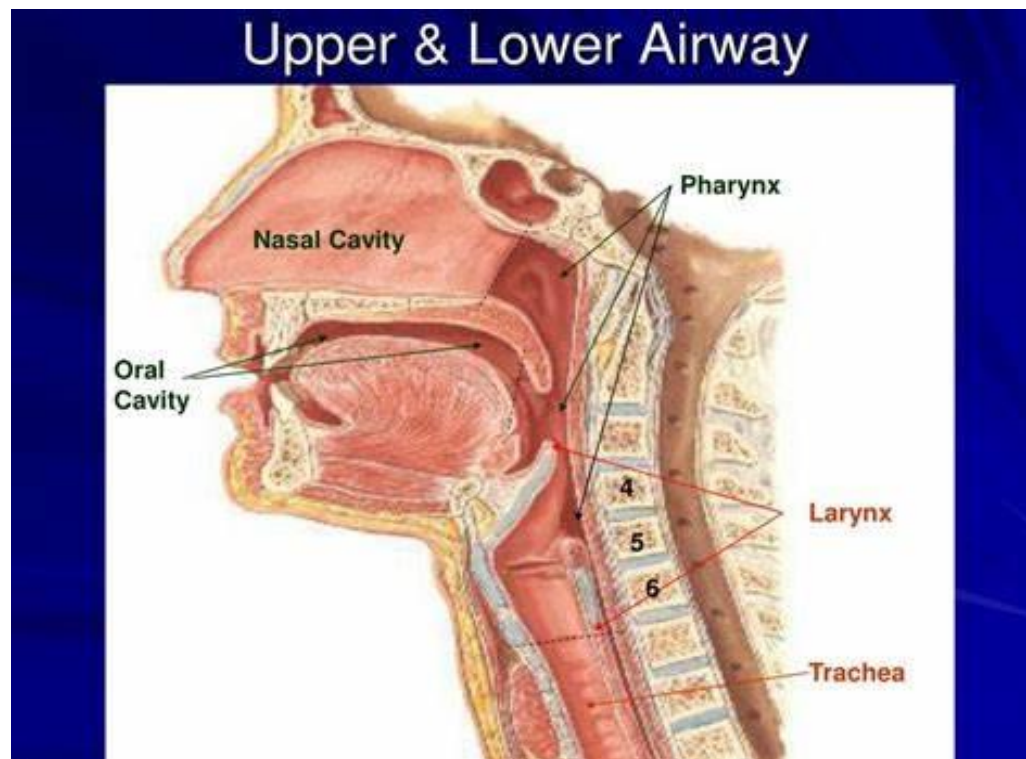
Dysphagia

- Cannot safely swallow
- Can cause aspiration & choking.





Aspiration:
When fluid, food,
saliva, or
medication
enters the lungs.





Signs and Symptoms:

- Eyes watering
- Facial grimacing
- Reddening in the face
- Coughing or excessive drooling with eating or drinking.
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Wheezing
- Statement such as “food is getting stuck”
- Frequent throat clearing after eating.



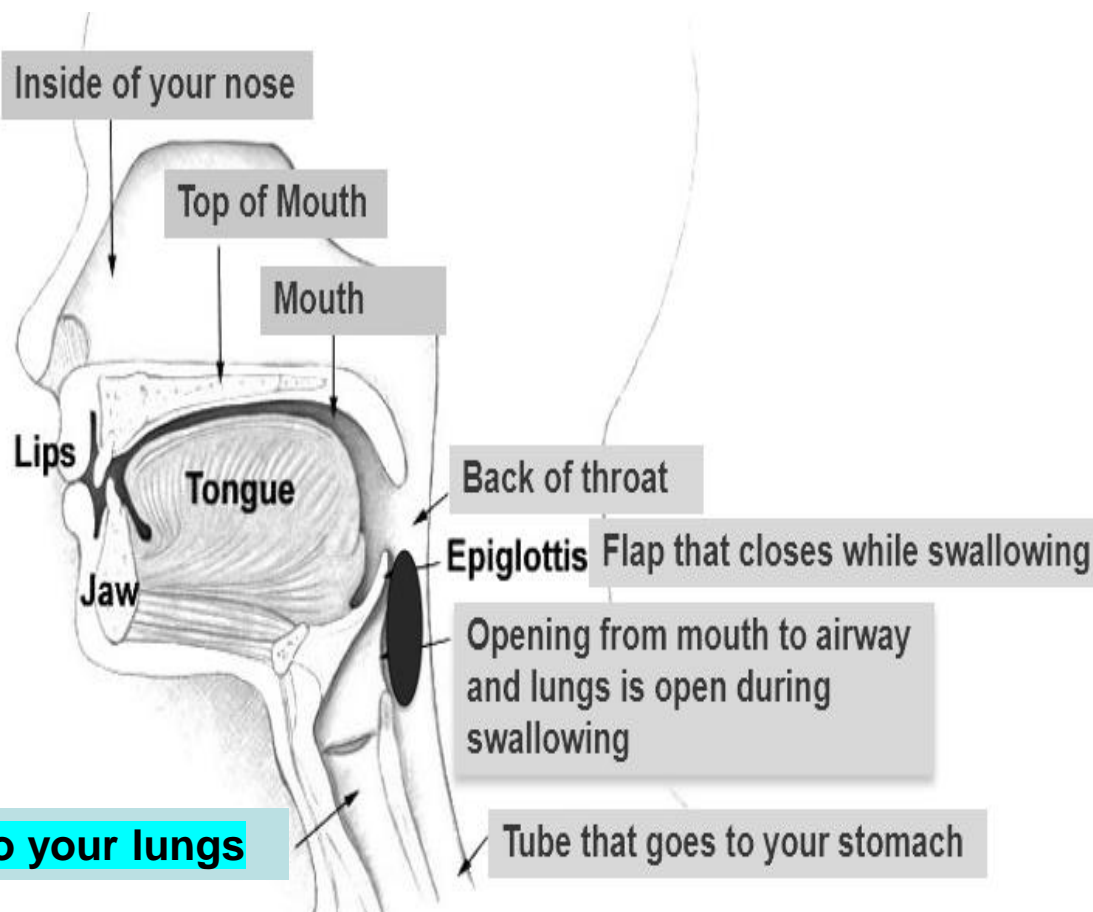
Aspiration can lead to:

- Refusal to eat
- Weight loss
- Poor nutrition
- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Hypoxia
- Pneumonia
- Death



What is Choking?

When something is in your throat or mouth, and it stops you from getting air by blocking the tube to your lungs.



Choking



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Choking
can happen
with food,
liquid, or
something
else.



Choking can
happen to
anyone.



**Individuals with disabilities can be at risk
for choking for a lot of different reasons.**



Who's at Risk for Choking and Aspiration?

Individuals with a history or diagnosis of:

- Swallowing disorders.
- Problems affecting the muscles used to swallow.
 - Seizures, Cerebral Palsy, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Myasthenia Gravis or Dementia.
- Strokes, traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, and problems affecting the head and neck.
- Decayed or missing teeth or improperly fitted dentures.
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).
- Feeding tubes and tracheostomies.



Other Risks for Choking and Aspiration:

- Being fed or eating too quickly
- Improper positioning
- Improper consistency or texture of food/liquids
- Packing or pouching food in the mouth
- Eating while driving or riding in a car

Posture while eating and drinking



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Sitting Positioning



Ideal



Not ideal

Bed Positioning



Ideal



Not ideal





This is an Emergency!!!

- Anxious or agitated state.
- Reddened face.
- Difficulty or noisy breathing.
- Severe coughing or gagging.
- Hands to throat.
- Not able to talk.
- Not able to breath.
- Skin turning gray or blue.
- Loss of consciousness.





Get help from someone right away.



If people are close to you and do not notice you are choking, make noise by stomping or hitting the table to get their attention.



Do 'the sign for choking' so they know what is happening.



If you are home alone, call 911 and make noises.

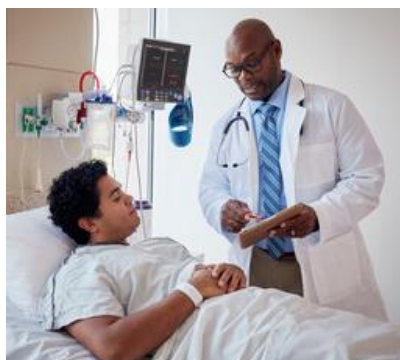


- All staff should be currently certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid, which includes performing abdominal thrusts (also called the “Heimlich” maneuver).
- Staff should be trained and oriented in all aspects of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) for the individuals for whom staff are providing service.
- Staff should be familiar with the policy and procedure for calling 911 for choking events, both in and outside of the individual’s residence.

What can happen after you choke?



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- You may feel scared or worried.
- It is ok to feel scared, it is scary.



- You may need to go to the hospital. The hospital will make sure you are ok.

- It is important to talk to your doctor.
- Your doctor may do tests to find out why you choked, so you don't choke again.



What can you do so you don't choke?



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- You should tell someone if you are having difficulty eating, drinking, or swallowing.
- You can tell your doctor, family, friends, or staff and they can help you.

- You should try and avoid eating the foods that you find difficult to eat or swallow.
- Avoid eating while driving or riding in a car.



What can you do so you don't choke?



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Wait to talk
until you
swallowed
the food.



Take small
bites and chew
things up.

Eat
slowly.



Sit up
straight.



Have a drink nearby and take
small drinks in between bites.



You may be more likely to choke on these foods:



Tough or chewy meat.



Chewy or sticky foods like sweets or peanut butter.



Soup with pieces of vegetables, chunky pudding, yogurt with fruit pieces, or Jell-o with fruit.



dogs or sausages.



Breakfast cereals or oatmeal.



You may be more likely to choke on these foods:



Foods with skins like grapes or tomatoes.



Crumbly foods like cookies or crackers.



Hard or small foods like nuts, raw vegetables, or hard candy.



Bread or other foods that can stick to your mouth like pizza.

Things that are not food



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Small
items



Buttons

Pins



Medications





Reviewing and following the Individual Support Plan:

- Supervision and assistance per orders.
- Always follow the prescribed diet.
- Prepare food as instructed.
- Avoid foods that were identified to increase risk.
- Dentures are securely in place and oral hygiene is completed per ISP.





- Staff training on identifying and documenting the signs and symptoms of aspiration and choking.
- Staff training on preparing prescribed modified food and drink consistency.





- Notify the individual's physician or speech therapist of any concerns so the appropriate testing can be completed to identify the issue.
- Utilize identified adaptive equipment with every meal and with snacks.
 - Specialized cups, utensils, plates etc.
- If the individual is placed on a special consistency diet, check with the Health Care Provider to determine if the individual's medications are in a form that will not cause choking.
 - Pills may need to be changed to a liquid form or crushed.
- Support for identifying dysphagia is available through the Health Care Quality Units. Ask about available screening tools.



- **Airway Clearance Devices:** Airway clearance devices (ACD) are items designed to help remove a lodged objects from the airway of an individual who is choking.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a safety communication to encourage the public to follow established anti-choking protocols, which are step-by-step guides, approved by the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association, to relieve the airway obstruction in choking victims. These protocols include abdominal thrusts (also called the “Heimlich” maneuver) for children and adults. These protocols do not include anti-choking devices.



- The safety and effectiveness of over-the-counter anti-choking devices have not been established; they are not FDA approved or cleared. If you choose to use them, only use anti-choking devices after established choking protocols have failed.
- The Chapter 6400 regulations neither require nor prohibit ACD use, although ACD use may not be used as a replacement for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training.
- The Department strongly recommends that a provider who wishes to use ACD consult with their legal counsel and insurance carrier to ensure that there are no issues related to ACD use that are unrelated to the Chapter 6400 requirements. It is also recommended that providers who use ACD develop and implement a policy for how it will be used, which includes but is not limited to how staff will be trained and when ACD use will occur.



- Heartsaver CPR AED Student Workbook, American Heart Association, April 2016, pgs. 56-61.
- American Heart Association: HeartSaver CPR, AED and First Aid Training Course- information available online at: [**American Heart Association: Atlas**](#) or by calling 1-877-AHA-4CPR or 1-877-242-4277.
- [**Health Care Quality Units \(HCQUs\)**](#).



- NIDCD Fact Sheet | Voice, Speech, and Language: Dysphagia, NIH Publication No. 13-4307, October 2010, reprinted February 2014.
- [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\), Adult Dysphagia.](#)
- FDA Encourages the Public to Follow Established Choking Rescue Protocols: FDA Safety Communication: [U.S. Food and Drug Administration.](#)



Thank You!!!