
DO I HAVE A SWALLOWING PROBLEM?

Do you have trouble swallowing or feel like food gets stuck in your throat? Do you sometimes choke or cough when eating or drinking? If you answered yes, or have concerns about your swallowing, take this 10-question quiz.

How bad are these problems when you eat or drink? Jot down an answer between 0 and 4 for each question, where 0 = no problem, and 4 = severe problems.

1. My swallowing problem has caused me to lose weight.
2. My swallowing problem interferes with my ability to go out for meals.
3. Swallowing liquids takes extra effort.
4. Swallowing solid food takes extra effort.
5. Swallowing pills takes extra effort.
6. Swallowing is painful.
7. The pleasure of eating is affected by my swallowing difficulty.
8. When I swallow, food sticks in my throat.
9. I cough when I eat.
10. Swallowing is stressful.

Add up the scores of your answers to the test statements. If your total is three (3) or greater, you should bring up your swallowing-related issues with your primary care physician. There are many common problems like acid reflux or medication side effects that can lead to some of these symptoms, but there could also be more serious causes such as esophageal cancer. If your swallowing difficulties do not improve, you may want to consult an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist, or otolaryngologist.

Reference

Belafsky PC, Mouadeb DA, Rees CJ, Pryor JC, Postma GN, Allen J, Leonard RJ. Validity and Reliability of the Eating Assessment Tool (EAT-10). Ann Otol Rhinol Laryngol. 2008 Dec;117(12):919-24.