ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Difficulty Swallowing

Difficulty swallowing, also called dysphagia, is a common symptom that arises with the progression of the terminal illness. Dysphagia may be acute (short acting) after a certain event or chronic (long lasting) due to many reasons including neurological conditions, head and neck cancers, or muscle weakness.

Common signs and symptoms to monitor for:

- Coughing or choking during eating
- Food sticking in the throat
- Drooling
- Unexplained weight loss
- Hoarse voice changes after swallowing

Tips for Difficulty Swallowing Management:

- Provide soft or pureed foods to ease swallowing.
- Encourage small, frequent meals.
- Ensure the patient is sitting upright during meals.
- Use thickening agents for liquids if recommended.

Record and Report to St. Francis:

- **Please report immediately if the patient suddenly cannot swallow at all**
- Unexplained changes in weight
- Coughing or choking with swallowing
- New or worsened cough and signs & symptoms of infection (i.e. fever, fatigue, difficulty breathing).
- Textures that worsen cough

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St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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