

# HOW DO EATING, DRINKING AND SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES AFFECT CHILDREN?

Infants, children and young people with childhood onset disability and those born prematurely are most likely to be at risk of dysphagia. However, feeding difficulties also occur in typically developing children.

## What issues do eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties lead to in infants, children and young people?

- Issues with the development of feeding skills
- Behavioural issues associated with eating, drinking and mealtimes
- They can cause chest infections, pneumonia, choking, dehydration, weight loss and malnutrition.

## How can speech and language therapists help?

- They can assess and identify possible causes of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties
- They can provide mealtime assessments
- They can refer children for a videofluoroscopy, manometry or FEES (flexible endoscopic evaluation of swallowing)
- They can recommend changes to feeding equipment, to the texture of food or drink, to feeding positions or different interventions.

**FIND OUT MORE AT  
[RCSLT.ORG/DYSPHAGIA](https://www.rcslt.org/dysphagia)**

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