

SITTING GREAT, BUT CAN'T SWALLOW – APPROPRIATE POSITIONING FOR FEEDING

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Feeding Experience

- Trial of substances from thin to thick, one consistency to multiple

Consistency	Effort	In the swallow, where did you work? (mouth, teeth, throat)
Thin (water)		
Thin puree		
Thick puree		
Solid Food		
Multiple		

Phases of Swallow

- Oral stage
 - To the mouth
 - Lips to chewing surface
 - Bolus control
- Pharyngeal stage
 - Tongue movements
 - Rate of swallow
 - Coordination of the swallow
- Esophageal Stage and on (not voluntarily controlled)
 - Reflux issues
 - Structural issues of webbing, fistulas (holes) and pooling of fluids

Effect of Tone and Deformity on Swallowing

- Abnormal tone increases the risk of swallowing issues (high and low tone)
- Structural abnormality increases the risk of decreased control, and therefore swallowing issues.
- Positioning that impacts on oral motor or respiratory control
 - Head/neck hyperextension, asymmetry, shoulder elevation, and scapular adduction

Features of Dysphagia

- Dysphagia definition
- Frequent respiratory illness
- Weight loss or poor weight gain
- Behaviours during mealtime (crying, food refusal)
- History of dehydration
- Frequent gagging, choking, coughing on food or secretions

Clinical Assessment – Seating Questions to Ask

- Does this client have any feeding issues, and what are the recommendations?
- Does this client have a swallowing disorder, and any medical guidelines with respect to positioning?
- Has there been a large weight gain or loss in the past 6 months?
- Is this client's conditioning one that is degenerative?

Positioning

- Head/neck hyperextension
- Asymmetry
- Shoulder Elevation,
- Scapular Adduction

Clinical Examples

- Young Infant
- Child
- Older Child
- Teenager
- Adult

Speaker Bio

Catherine O'Leary currently works in community private practice around Toronto, servicing children and young adults and their families. The client base is varied. This variety drives the creativity needed in the community to address family based issues, thereby reducing the burden of care of these families.