

The Speech and Language Therapy Department provide services for people with impairments of speech, language, swallowing, feeding, voice and fluency.

If your patient is experiencing any of the symptoms/signs listed below then referral to their service is appropriate:

- Signs of aspiration on textures patient usually manages during eating and drinking or directly afterwards
 - Coughing
 - Throat clearing
 - Choking
 - Wet, gurgly voice.
- History of recurrent chest infections/pneumonias.
- Recurrent sticking sensation of food in throat which precipitates a cough or sensation of choking.
- Difficulty managing mixed consistencies e.g. muesli, lumpy soup.
- Difficulty manipulating solid foods in oral cavity within constraints of dentition e.g. crackers, bread.
- Regurgitation of undigested food.
- Sialorrhea/hypersalivation.
- Nasal regurgitation.
- Dysarthria (slurred speech)-new presentation due to anatomical cause (i.e. tongue CA) or neurological cause.
- Dyspraxia(motor speech disorder)-with neurological cause.
- Dysphasia (language impairment)-with neurological cause.
- Dysphonia (Needs to have had an ENT assessment of vocal folds to be accepted by SLT).
- Dysfluency/stuttering.
- Tracheostomy/Laryngectomy.

Those experiencing difficulty taking pills should be advised to try yoghurt/puree and, if continue to have difficulty, seek pharmacist advice re further modification of medications i.e. crushed.

Referrals should be sent via the SLT eReferral; alternatively send a paper referral via the referral centre.

The Speech and Language Service can also provide training resources for specific conditions e.g. motor neurone disease, feeding difficulties in the under two-year-olds, swallowing management with dementia, tracheotomy and laryngectomy. They can be contacted on 579 8785 (Tauranga Hospital) or x4718 (Whakatane Hospital).