



# Swallowing manoeuvre: Supraglottic swallow (airway protection)

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This leaflet is for patients who are experiencing swallowing difficulties and have been advised to complete the supraglottic swallowing manoeuvre. This manoeuvre should only be used by the individual named below and under guidance from your speech and language therapist.

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Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Why do I need to use this technique?

Having a swallowing difficulty (known as dysphagia) means you may be at risk of food, fluids or saliva 'going down the wrong way'. If this happens, it can result in choking and/or chest infections known as 'aspiration pneumonia'.

## The technique

When you swallow, there are certain mechanisms required to protect your airway from any food and drink entering your lungs. This swallow technique is designed to maximise your airway protection when you swallow. You should feel effort when doing this exercise, but **STOP** if you experience any pain. Please raise any concerns you have with your speech and language therapist or doctor.

## How to complete the 'supraglottic swallow' technique:

- A) Take a breath and hold it in your throat. Try to imagine bearing down before lifting something heavy.
- B) Now, take a mouthful of food or drink, swallow hard and keep holding your breath.
- C) Immediately after the swallow, cough and then swallow again.
- D) Breathe comfortably, then repeat.

## Contact details:

Speech and Language Therapy Department – 0118 322 5205 Monday to Friday.

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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