

Frog In Your Throat?

by Leighanna Konetski, RD

More and more I hear from our clients that they or their loved ones are having difficulty swallowing. I'm often told that it feels like they have a "frog in their throat" or that something is stuck in the back of their throat. As harmless as this might seem, it actually is a serious medical concern. When you or someone you know is having difficulty swallowing and/or often choking on foods while eating, they run the risk of aspirating, or drawing food or fluid into their lungs. This could lead to aspiration pneumonia, pneumonia resulting from swallowing foreign substances. It is very important that you inform your doctor or health care professional as soon as possible when you or your loved one is having difficulty swallowing. Once they are aware of the problem, there are a variety of things that can be done to make eating more comfortable, and safe.

If you are providing care to loved ones that may not be able to tell you they are having difficulty swallowing, below is a list of signs to look for that might indicate there is a problem. (This is especially important to watch in those with Alzheimer's disease and dementia) If you notice any of these when your loved one is eating, inform your doctor immediately.

- ✓ Coughing
- ✓ Choking
- ✓ Drooling
- ✓ Gagging
- ✓ Pocketing of foods (in cheeks)



Volunteers of America is unable to provide blended, pureed or mechanically altered diets. If you have been instructed by your physician, speech therapist, or dietitian to follow one of these prescribed diets, please call Leighanna Konetski, RD at the Volunteers of America office at 303-297-0408.

Dental Resources

The following is a list of dental resources that help seniors with dental care.

Metro Denver Dental Society (303) 488-9700

University of Colorado (303) 724-6921
School of Dentistry
13065 E 17th Ave.
Aurora, CO 80010

Senior Answers and Services (303) 333-3482
(Old Age Pension)

Inner City Health Center – Dental Clinic (303) 296-4873
3405 Downing
Denver, CO

Eastside Health Center – Dental Clinic (303) 436-4740
501 28th Street
Denver, CO 80205

Tri-County Health Department (303) 341-9370
15400 E. 14th Place
Aurora, CO 80010

Dental Access Centers (No Sliding Fee) (303) 394-0231
1717 York Street
Denver, CO 80205

Dental Hygiene Clinic (303) 365-8302
Community College of Denver
Lowry Campus