



# WRHA Long Term Care Speech-Language Pathology Services

## **WHOM** do we service?

- 38 long term care homes, approximately 5706 beds in the WRHA

## **WHAT** services do we provide for residents, facilities and families?

- Swallowing and communication assessment, consultation & education

## **WHAT** does a **SWALLOWING CONSULTATION** include?

- **CLINICAL** swallowing assessment within the resident's LTC facility
- **INSTRUMENTAL** swallowing assessment (i.e., Video fluoroscopic swallowing study – VFSS) is available with SLP recommendation and with physician diagnostic imaging requisition order
- **EDUCATION** for residents/family/staff. SLP provides counseling and education to residents, families, and team members regarding the nature and management of a resident's swallowing disorder, associated risks, available interventions, and anticipated outcomes
- **CONVERSATIONS** regarding **END-OF-LIFE** and **QUALITY of LIFE** related to the progression of swallowing difficulties and how they may impact decision making
- **MANAGEMENT** of swallowing, including diet texture modifications and resident-specific safe-feeding and swallowing strategies
- **COLLABORATION** with other disciplines (e.g., RD, OT, nursing, Dental, GI) as swallowing difficulties may be impacting or be impacted by other factors.

## **Referral Criteria: Swallowing Assessment**

- Any signs/symptoms of possible swallowing difficulty on meal observation screening (MOS) or reported by staff/family/resident
- Choking event – urgent referral
- Significant change in swallowing, absent swallow or query NPO status – urgent referral
- Recurrent chest infections
- Admitted with tube feed
- Continuation of care from acute care for follow-up of swallowing recommendations and re-assessment for any possible changes
- Potential for diet texture upgrades – includes residents admitted on most restrictive diet textures (e.g., pureed diet, thickened fluids)
- Family could benefit from education related to swallowing difficulties, associated risks, available interventions, end-of life swallowing and anticipated outcomes

## **WHAT does a COMMUNICATION CONSULTATION include?**

*Direct treatment for communication impairments is not available. Our focus is on assessment of functional abilities and providing recommendations and limited training in the use of strategies to facilitate residents' communication with staff and family.*

### **Referral Criteria: Communication Assessment**

- Sudden change in communication (speech, language or cognitive-linguistic communication)
- Possible benefit from augmentative-alternative communication – initial assessment may lead to further referral to [Communication Devices Program](#)
- Possible benefit from SLP therapy – LTC SLP can provide brief assessment to determine candidacy for therapy and provide information regarding how to access public or private SLP therapy
- Family/staff could benefit from education regarding communication strategies for individual residents

## **HOW TO REFER?**

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY REFERRAL FORM** Any member of the medical team may refer for swallowing assessments or communication assessments.

- [SLP regional referral form](#)
- [Meal Observation screening form](#)

## **ANNUAL TRAINING on MANAGEMENT of FEEDING/SWALLOWING in LONG TERM CARE**

- [Regional policy 110.130.010](#)

### **Training Resources:**

1. Mealtime Assistant Training (MAT) for Volunteer & Families ([video](#)) ([pdf](#))
2. Diet Order Training ([video](#)) ([pdf](#))
3. Dysphagia Management Staff Training (DMST) ([video](#)) ([pdf](#))
4. Management of Obstructed Airway Training (ask your LTC site educator for specific training)
5. Safe Feeding & Swallowing management Quiz ([pdf](#))

### **Other Resources:**

1. Standard feeding procedures ([pdf](#))
2. Swallowing difficulties brochure Eng/Fr ([pdf](#))
3. Medication administration guidelines for residents with dysphagia ([pdf](#))
4. Conversations in LTC :
  - a) Meals in a LTC home ([English/ French](#))
  - b) Difficulties with meals for people with dementia ([English/ French](#))
  - c) When a person has trouble eating and swallowing ([English/ French](#))
  - d) Nourishing the whole person ([English/ French](#))
  - e) Nutrition and swallowing at the end of life ([English/ French](#))