

Communication and swallowing difficulties in MND

Nina Squires

Speech and Language Therapist

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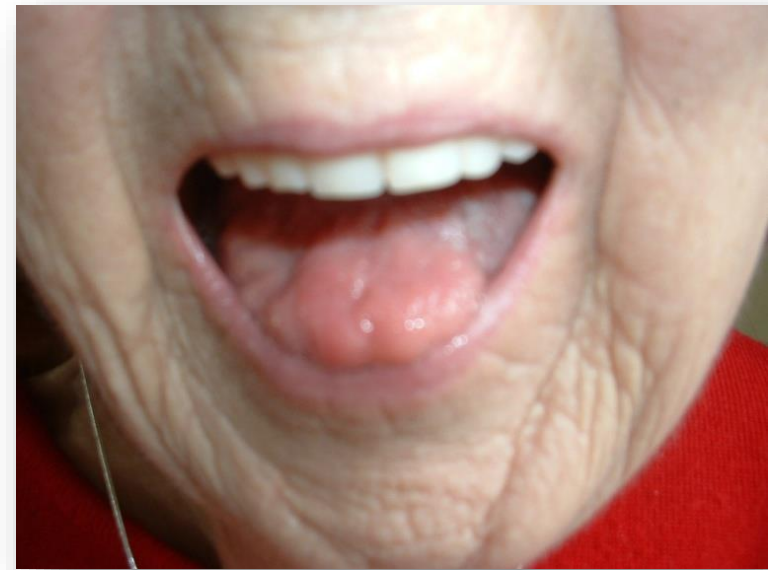


Bulbar symptoms

- Bulbar onset
- Poor lip seal
- Wasted tongue
- Weak palate
- Respiratory weakness



Bulbar symptoms







Communication difficulties

- **Dysarthria:** Weakness/inco-ordination of lips, tongue and soft palate.
 - Articulation: slurred speech
 - Resonance: nasality
 - Respiration: reduced volume
 - Prosody: altered stress
- **Language impairment**



Low-tech aids

- Picture board
- Alphabet chart
- Communication book
- Phrase list
- Gesture
- Pen & paper





High tech- aids

- Electronic communication aids
- Switches
- Voice banking
- Message banking
- Text, email & social media
- AAC apps





Psychosocial Impact

- Talking can be a big part of identity
- Changing role
- Social life
- Society's reaction to dysarthria
- Frustration & isolation



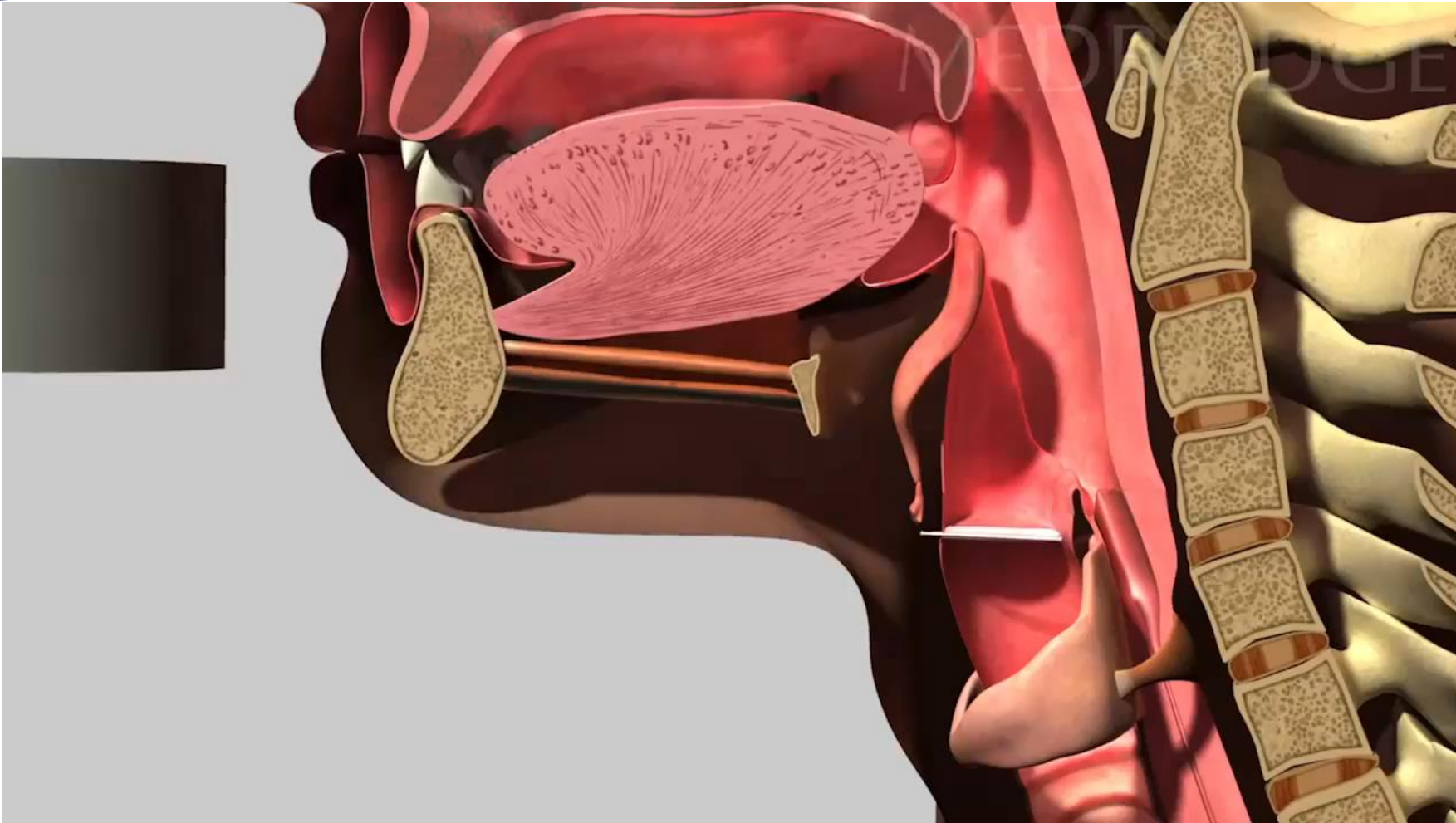
Tips for listeners

- Minimise barriers eg reduce background noise, maintain eye contact
- Encourage key words
- Establish yes / no response and ask closed questions
- Give patient plenty of time
- Be honest if you do not understand



Saliva₃

- 1.5 litres of saliva a day
- 3 glands: parotid, submandibular & sublingual
- Mastication, transition and digestion
- Varies in consistency







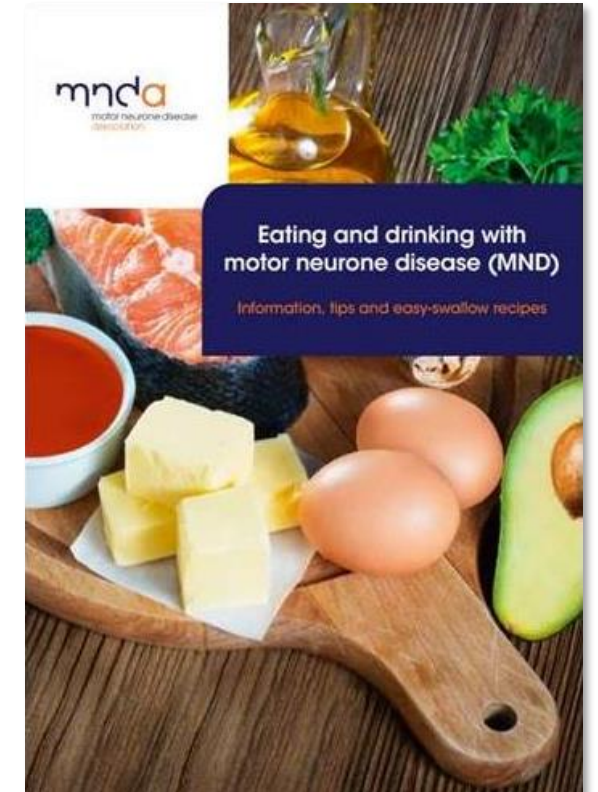
Signs of dysphagia⁴

- Frequent coughing/choking on eating and/or drinking
- Chest infections
- Wet sounding voice during and after meals
- Dehydration
- Weight loss



Dysphagia – What can we do?

- Education
- Modify diet and fluid consistency
- Change timing of meals
- Change portion size
- Refer to Dietitian
- Alternative feeding





Psychosocial impact of dysphagia

- Fear of choking
- Being fed by others
- Embarrassment at mealtimes
- Effect on family and friends
- Gastrostomy: a milestone



Key points.....

- Talking, eating and drinking are very social activities
- Open and timely discussion, anticipating changing needs
- Individualised and patient centred
- Multidisciplinary approach essential



Reference list

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3. MNDA P3 Managing saliva problems in MND for health and social care professionals. [mndassociation.org](https://www.mndassociation.org)
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5. Eating and drinking with MND web app
6. NICE 2016. Motor neurone disease: assessment and management
[nice.org.uk](https://www.nice.org.uk)