

Difficulties with Swallowing (Dysphagia) in Neurological Injuries or Conditions



Greater Manchester
Neurorehabilitation & Integrated
Stroke Delivery Network

Oral Stage Difficulties (Mouth)

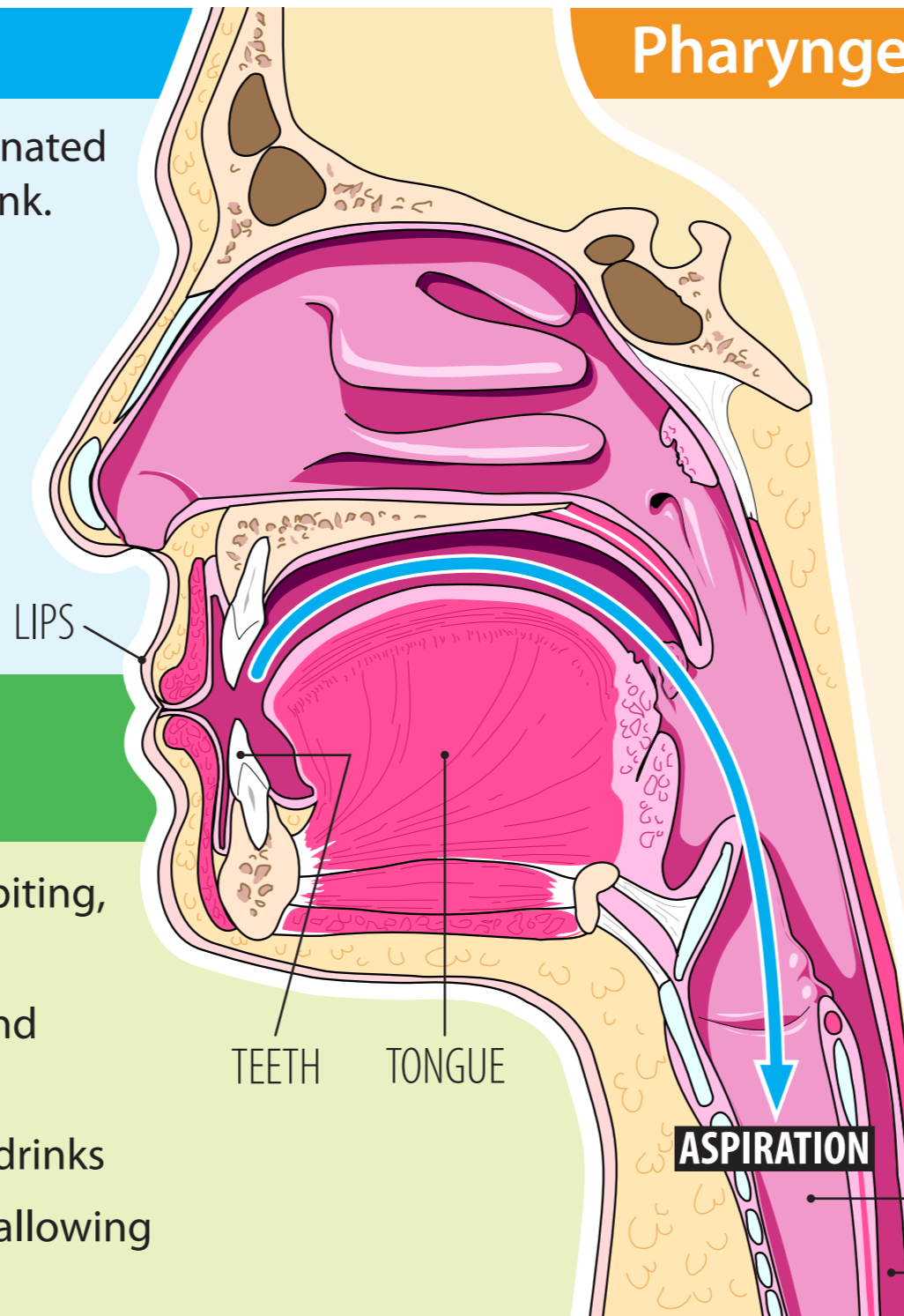
The muscles in the mouth may be weak or uncoordinated which can cause difficulties controlling food and drink.

Some signs of oral stage difficulties:

- Food left in the mouth
- Difficulties chewing
- Difficulties moving food backwards to swallow
- Salivating / drooling
- Changes in sensation or taste

To help make swallowing safer you may be asked to:

- Do **exercises** to strengthen the muscles used in biting, chewing and swallowing
- Eat a **modified diet** e.g. softer or pureed foods and avoiding other foods
- Drink **modified fluids** e.g. adding a thickener to drinks
- Adopt a different posture or position to assist swallowing



Pharyngeal Stage Difficulties (Throat)

Aspiration is where food or drink is 'going down the wrong way' towards the lungs.

Some signs of aspiration during or immediately after swallowing:

- Coughing / choking
- Voice sounding wet or gurgly
- Persistent throat clearing
- Increased breathlessness

Consequences of aspiration may be:

- Frequent chest infections
- Pneumonia
- Weight loss
- Death

For further information contact a Speech and Language Therapist