



TWIN FALLS

254 River Vista Place
(208) 734-7333

BURLEY

1259 Overland Ave
(208) 647-0184

BELLEVUE

733 N. Main Street
Suite E
(208) 788-0777

**Physical,
Occupational,
&
Speech
Therapy**

*providing
one-on-one
individualized care
for adult and pediatric
clients*

Vital Stim for Feeding and Swallowing Disorders

Vital-Stim aims to coordinate and strengthen the musculature involved in healthy swallowing. Generalization of skills obtained within the treatment room can be maintained and built upon at home.

What constitutes a swallowing disorder?

Any of the following symptoms along with poor weight gain:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| -poor feeding initiation | -limited intake | -limited motivation to eat |
| -leaking of food contents from lips | -low facial tone | -loss of lip seal while chewing |
| -limited tongue movement | -reports of headaches | -ineffective chewing |
| -increased chewing time | -wet voice | -re-occurring chest infections |
| -reflux | -soft food diet | -coughing while eating |
| -coughing after eating | | |
| -difficulty completing a meal due to fatigue | | |
| -multiple swallows required to swallow a bite | | |
| -feeling of food being stuck in throat | | |
| -in alert state while eating or overstimulated while eating | | |
| -eyes watering while consuming a meal | | |

If you, or your child, experiences 3 or more of these symptoms/signs of a swallowing disorder, as well as poor weight gain, or the loss of enjoyment while eating, it may be appropriate to talk to your doctor regarding the possibility of a swallowing disorder.

Swallowing disorders can take place in any 1 or multiple stages of the swallow. The swallow is broken down into 4 distinct stages, the oral preparatory, the oral, the pharyngeal, and the esophageal stage. The oral preparatory stage constitutes any behavior leading up to putting food in the mouth, this includes smelling the food, seeing the food, and touching the food. The oral stage involves the manipulation of food within the oral cavity, including chewing, tasting, and initiating the swallow. The pharyngeal stage begins when the swallow is no longer under voluntary control and ends when the food passes through sphincter muscles that hold the stomach contents in. Children and adults alike can experience swallowing difficulties anywhere along the way of this continuum.

For further information regarding feeding and swallowing difficulties, or Vital-Stim therapy ask your doctor or a certified speech language pathologist.

You may also visit

<http://www.vitalstimtherapy.com/> or
<http://search.asha.org/default.aspx?q=swallowing>



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