

## Inside This Issue

- National Dysphagia Awareness Month
- Xerostomia: Dysphagia's Evil Twin Sister
- Free Home COVID Tests
- Training Opportunities
- Common Meds That Cause Dry Mouth
- Safe Picnicking
- PA HRST Service Team
- Angel Shots

Sign up for the monthly  
Healthy Outcomes  
Newsletter:

[PLBROFEE@GEISINGER.EDU](mailto:PLBROFEE@GEISINGER.EDU)

# Healthy Outcomes

## NATIONAL DYSPHAGIA AWARENESS MONTH

**Dysphagia** (dis-FAY-gee-uh) is difficulty, pain, or discomfort when swallowing. It occurs when food does not move safely from the mouth to the stomach. When that happens, a person may swallow food into their lungs. This can cause infection, respiratory problems, and other medical problems.



Some people with dysphagia have problems swallowing certain foods or liquids, while others can't swallow at all.

### Signs of Dysphagia include:

- *Difficulty chewing and moving food from mouth to throat*
- *Oral loss/drooling of food and/or liquid*
- *Remnants of food that remain on the tongue or in cheeks*
- *Throat clearing and/or coughing during or immediately after swallowing*
- *Wet-sounding voice during or after meals*
- *Pain when swallowing*
- *Feeling like food is stuck in your throat*
- *Swallowing several times to clear each bite of food or sip of liquid*
- *Difficulty coordinating breathing and eating*

## Common causes of dysphagia:

- *Neurological conditions-such as Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and multiple sclerosis*
- *Nerve damage usually following a traumatic brain injury or stroke*
- *Respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease*
- *Head and neck cancer and some head and neck cancer treatment*
- *Gastrointestinal or esophageal disorders*

## When to seek medical advice

*You should see your PCP if you, or someone you care for, have difficulty swallowing or any other signs of dysphagia so you can get treatment to help with your symptoms. Early intervention can help prevent serious complications. For more information on [Diagnosis and Treatment of Dysphagia](#).*

**Although 1 in 6 adults report experiencing dysphagia, only 50% had discussed their difficulty with a clinician (Adkins et al, 2019).**

[Dysphagia Research Society](#)

## **Xerostomia: Dysphagia's evil twin sister** by Reva Barewal, DDS, MS, Dipl. ABDSM -October 21, 2019

**EVERYONE EXPERIENCES DRY MOUTH.** That cotton ball sensation in your mouth that makes your tongue feel twice its' size. Speech becomes an effort and swallowing difficult. Most healthy adults can trace back the cause to the common culprits- alcohol, caffeine, or smoking. Taking a few restorative glasses of water is often the cure. However, 13-28% of older adults face this as a chronic issue, called **xerostomia**, every day. This number can increase to an alarming 60% in long term care. Loss of quality of life stemming from reduced food enjoyment is a reality. Also, loss of oral health and ultimately overall health raises the need for us to share information regarding this condition across disciplines.

A common belief is that salivary hypofunction is an age-related change. This is not true at all. It is largely caused by health conditions, hydration, and medication. What we will explore is how does the presence of dysphagia and xerostomia affect the individual and what can we do to help them.

Dysphagia sufferers have an increased risk of hospital readmissions for pneumonia and aspiration pneumonia. However, Dr. Donna Graville, director of the NW Center for Speech and Swallowing at OHSU shed some light on the added concern with xerostomia. "A patient can be so dry mouthed that crackers turn to dust with chewing and can create a real choking risk in the dysphagia population."

Entire article: [Xerostomia: Dysphagia's evil twin sister](#)



Just a reminder to everyone about the [FREE COVID TAKE-HOME TESTS](#) available online. Each order has 8 rapid Covid-19 tests, and you could order 2 times if needed (16 rapid tests). They are shipped via USPS. Ordering is completely free, and tests usually arrive between 7-12 days after you request them.

COVID Levels and Recommendations:

[Check Your Community COVID-19 Level](#)

[Choosing a Mask or Respirator for Different Situations](#)



The [Central PA HCQU](#) provides free trainings and technical assistance to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) or Autism, their families, service providers and county staff. All trainings are offered by registered nurses. Contract us if you are interested in a training on Dysphagia or any physical health condition.

*(The [COVID-19 online course](#) has been updated.)*



JUNE 9, 2022, 10AM – 11:30AM  
**BRAIN INJURY 101**

JUNE 16, 2022, 10AM – 11:30AM  
**BRAIN INJURY 201**

The [Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania](#) will present two trainings funded by a grant from the PA Department of Health and free to all attendees.

CEUs are available for nurses!

To attend, please see registration information listed on the [training flyer](#).



**Weis Markets Dietitian  
Virtual Cook-Along**

**June 20th, 2022 @ 1PM**

Blood Orange and Cara Cara Iced Tea

Join Weis Dietitian Melissa this June to learn about staying hydrated in the warm summer weather. Enjoy an informational session followed by a recipe demonstration showing you how to make a refreshing citrus iced tea.

To join, please see information listed on the [training flyer](#).

## COMMON MEDICATIONS KNOWN TO CAUSE DRY MOUTH

**Antihistamines: Benadryl, Zyrtec, Xyzal, Allegra, and Claritin**

**Antipsychotics and mood stabilizers: Cymbalta, Celexa, Lexapro, Paxil, Prozac, Zoloft**

**Certain heart and blood pressure medications: Lasix and Inderal**

**Certain muscle relaxers, like Zanaflex**

**Certain nausea medications, like Phenergan**

**Benzodiazepines used for anxiety, like Xanax, Ativan, Valium**

**Opioid medications used for pain such as Norco and Percocet**

**Stimulant medications like Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta**

**Anti-reflux agents like proton pump inhibitors Omeprazole**

**Alzheimer's Disease medication like Aricept, Exelon and Razadyne**

**Anticholinergics used to treat overactive bladder: Ditropan, Detrol, Enablex, Toviaz and Vesicare**

[Dry Mouth: Are Your Medications to Blame?](#)

### THE BOTTOM LINE

*Dry mouth is a side effect of many medications and can be potentially harmful.*

*If you have dry mouth and think it's cause by one of your medications, talk to your health care provider. They can help find a treatment that helps alleviate your discomfort.*

## Safe Picnicking



### Eat El fresco

Eating outdoors with your family and friends is a boost for not only your physical health but mental health too.

Getting outside boosts the immune system and your Vitamin D level (use sunscreen), through sunshine and fresh air. Things to keep in mind:

### Pick a safe spot

Is the park open to the public? Is there safe parking and rest facilities?

Do you need to reserve tables or pavilions?

Are pets welcome too?

Observe hours of operation.

Respect rules, no alcohol, no open fires, no picking the flowers, or feeding the wildlife.

### Bring the essentials

Are there grills open to the public or can you bring your own?

Food, drink, utensils, plates, napkins, garbage bags.

Sunscreen, hand sanitizers, bug spray

Games for all ages, corn hole, horseshoes, quoits and, frisbees.

### Dress it up

Light clothing for the warmer weather.

Hiking, have proper sturdy footwear, long pants, and shirt sleeves to ward off the bugs.

Hats for sun protection, sunglasses for eye protection.

Swimsuits and towels, and did we mention sunscreen.

### Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.

*DebE*

Deb Erdman RN CRN

TCRN; Injury Prevention Coordinator





# MEET YOUR PA HRST SERVICE TEAM

# hello

*We are excited to introduce you to your HRST Service Team! Service Teams were developed to help better support HRST users in Pennsylvania.*



**Tammy Armstrong M.S.Ed**

Administrative Service Representative

Tammy has over 40 years of rich work history serving people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. She has compassionately served as a special educator, case manager and Program Director in both residential and Community Day Services programs. Tammy enjoys and is skilled in the areas of leadership, outcomes and advocacy. Tammy joined IntellectAbility in April 2019.



**Daleigh Tallent RN, MSN**

Clinical Service Representative

Daleigh began a second career as a Registered Nurse in 2013. She has worked in various settings, including ambulatory, acute, and long-term care, as well as nursing education. Daleigh received her MSN in Nursing Administration in 2017 and has since held several leadership roles. In 2018, her passion for patient advocacy, caring for vulnerable populations, and staff development led her to a career in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. She has served as a Regional Director/RN, Lead I/DD RN, and Developmental Disability Professional (DDP) in both private and government sectors in Georgia. Daleigh joined IntellectAbility as a Clinical Support Service Rep in April 2021.

We understand each AE is unique, so we look forward to working with you more closely in the future to address the health and safety concerns for the self-advocates you directly serve. Please reach out to us any time with questions, concerns, or comments. We're here to help!

We will:

1. Work directly with your users to ensure the best use of the HRST
2. Monitor accuracy of screenings and proper use of the HRST
3. Offer you and your users targeted training and coaching (at no cost!)
4. And more...

Tammy Armstrong, [Tammy@ReplacingRisk.com](mailto:Tammy@ReplacingRisk.com) Daleigh Tallent, [Daleigh@ReplacingRisk.com](mailto:Daleigh@ReplacingRisk.com)

**24/7 support lines:**

PA technical support: [PAsupport@ReplacingRisk.com](mailto:PAsupport@ReplacingRisk.com) PA clinical support: [PAclinassist@ReplacingRisk.com](mailto:PAclinassist@ReplacingRisk.com)

If you have questions concerning the HRST and/or need to acquire an account, change account information, or remove an account, please email both the of the following parties:

Cheryl L. Callahan: [clcallahan@geisinger.edu](mailto:clcallahan@geisinger.edu) and Patricia L. Brofee: [plbrofee@geisinger.edu](mailto:plbrofee@geisinger.edu).

## CONTACT US

---

Central PA HCQU  
29 Montour Street  
Danville PA 17822  
M.C. 28-75

Cheryl Callahan, RN  
Director

[ccallahan@geisinger.edu](mailto:ccallahan@geisinger.edu)

Patricia Brofee, RN  
Training Coordinator  
[plbrofee@geisinger.edu](mailto:plbrofee@geisinger.edu)

Kristy Campbell  
Data Support Analyst  
[kacampbell@geisinger.edu](mailto:kacampbell@geisinger.edu)

Our HCQU includes registered nurses experienced in serving individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism. Visit our website for their contact information and the counties they support.

[CLICK HERE](#)



### HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A DATE THAT HASN'T GONE WELL OR MADE YOU FEEL UNSAFE?

If so, there are many bars and restaurants that participate in an initiative that allows an individual to order a special drink to alert staff that you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Many establishments utilize a drink called an “**angel shot**” as a code word for their patrons to use. Restaurants post flyers in their restrooms that provide instructions on what terms to use to alert the staff that you need help. This can include different phrases to ordering the drinks.



For example- “with a lime” means that the individual would like the bartender to call police. Having this program gives their patrons a

safe place to meet new individuals, go on first dates, and safely get a drink.

**The Women’s Center, Inc.** of Columbia and Montour counties provides free and confidential support services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and incest. These services include Individual and group counseling, emergency shelter, medical advocacy and accompaniment, legal advocacy and accompaniment, and education programs. Services are available 24/7 by contacting our hotline at (570)-784-6631 or toll free at 1-800-544-8293.

*The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health-related situations. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.*