

How can care partners enhance the **holiday dining** experience for people with Parkinson's experiencing **swallowing challenges**?

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Typical Holiday Dining Experiences



Family meal at home

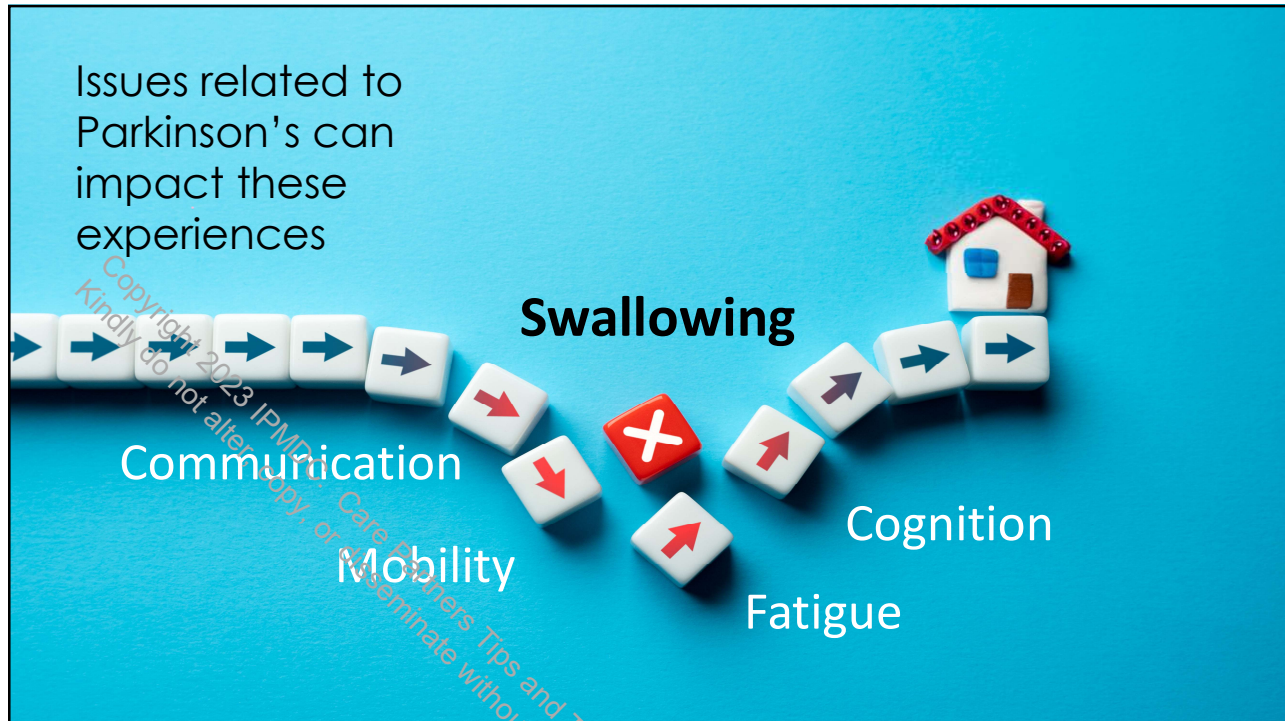


Gatherings at other friend's and family member's homes



Events at restaurants and other public settings

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4 Phases of swallowing

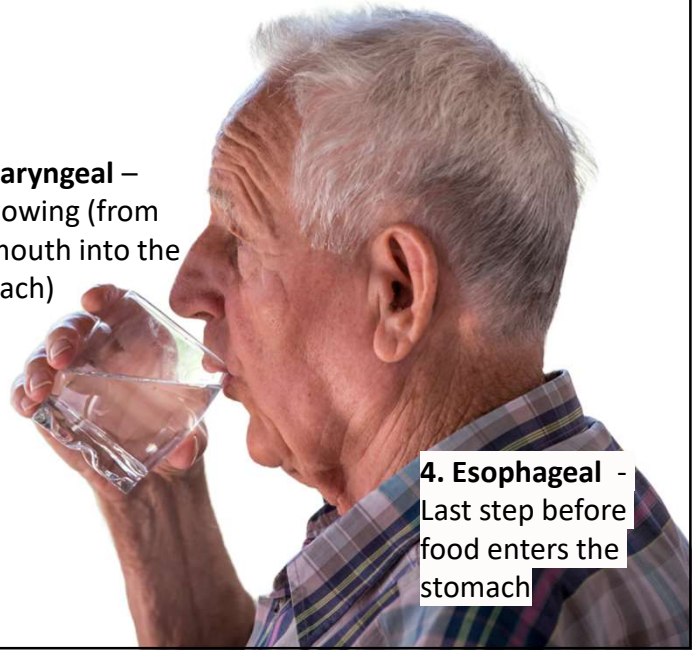
(and what can go wrong)

1. Pre-oral –
From the plate
into the mouth

2. Oral –
Chewing and
preparing to
swallow

3. Pharyngeal –
Swallowing (from
the mouth into the
stomach)

4. Esophageal -
Last step before
food enters the
stomach




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Factors that can
influence the
swallowing phases
(and **tips** to help)




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Seating Arrangements

- Set up for optimal posture
- Make moments to get up during the meal & move
 - Getting in and out easily
 - “Change venues”
- Sufficient elbow room
- Good lightening
- Select who & how many to invite.

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Maintaining a good posture while sitting down

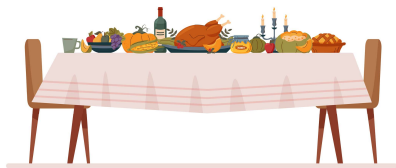
Using pre-approved nonverbal cues to help

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Reserving good space for elbows

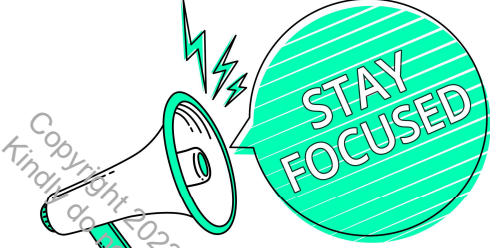
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Utensils and set up

- Utensils: easy to grip and hold
- Plates with higher lip or consider divided plates
- Adaptive (decorated) equipment for all and not only PD person
- Add “finger foods”
- Anticipating needs to avoid extra or excessive reaching while chewing

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Reducing distractions & triggers

- **Noisy environments**
 - Background music
 - Noisy conversations
- **Don't neglect visual noise**
 - Activity in the background
 - Facing bright light sources
- **Shorten time at the table.**

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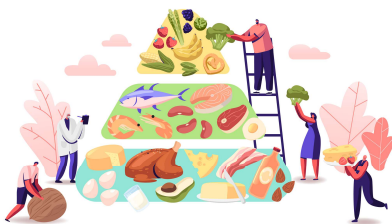
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Managing fatigue

- **Communicate needs** & concerns in advance with guests.
- Change what needs to change – don't be **victim of traditions & rituals**. Choose a few traditions to hold on to & be open to creating new ones.

Create time for rest: arrange to schedule a little break/downtime (Before guests arrive and/or During events if necessary)

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Types of food

Difficult to cut = difficult to chew

AVOID

- Intact, heavy meats – steak, pork chop, prime rib?
- Other items that are difficult to chew – raw vegetables
- Stringy or fibrous vegetables- asparagus, celery
- “Scatter consistencies” – rice, popcorn, nuts
- Dry foods – bread, dry cuts of meat

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Instead, consider

- Softer cuts of meat (fish, meatloaf, some poultry)
- Softer hors d'oeuvre options – olives, lightly steamed vegetables
- Incorporating moisture with gravy, sauces and condiments
- Pureed items (soup, squash, pumpkin pie)
- Substitute problematic items such as rice with mashed potatoes or serve with sauces for cohesiveness

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Consider “Finger Foods”

¼ cut sandwiches | Pieces of cheese | Pieces of fruit | Olives | Chips and dip | Vegetables & dips

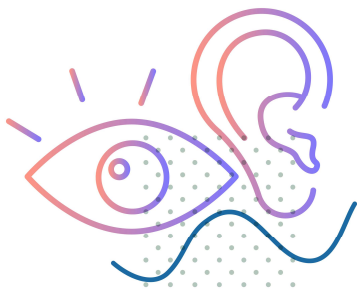
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Avoid foods that may impact your Parkinson's

- Items that block proper absorption of meds (primarily protein)
- Items that impair **cognition**, including those that exacerbate **fatigue** (primarily alcohol)


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Don't ignore the impact of hearing loss & vision difficulties on swallowing.

- Impaired hearing and vision can affect one's ability to perceive and respond to environmental cues, leading to potential safety risks during eating and swallowing.

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Facilitating communication can reduce risk of swallowing issues when talking

- Controlling noise
- Slowing down conversations
- Favor more global versus multiple-side conversations
- Facilitating talking by signaling to take turns
- Personal amplification

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Impact of Drooling

In addition to solutions from your doctor....

- Keeping a towel nearby
 - Wristband trick
- Keeping your mouth “busy”
 - Ice cubes
 - Gum/hard candy
- Agree on a discrete cue during mealtimes

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Gastroesophageal Reflux Disorder (GERD)



- Tendency to overeat during the holidays can exacerbate
- Keep over-the-counter options on hand
- Keep “reflux precautions” in mind

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Summary of good mealtime habits

Person with Parkinson's

Start	with upright posture
Take	your time
Let	meal partners know if you need more time to speak
Avoid	talking and eating at the same time
Consider	finger foods and other simple to eat items
Special occasions	Consider having a little snack before

Care Partner

Reduce	background noise & distractions
Avoid	backlighting, which obscures visibility
Utilize	adaptive equipment when needed
Include	communication aids like “personal amplifiers”
Special occasions	Consider bringing preferred cutlery, glasses, & other tools to the restaurant/other

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