

The Dysphagia Outcome and Severity Scale

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Table 1. Dysphagia outcome and severity scale—final revision

<p>Full per-oral nutrition (P.O): Normal diet</p> <hr/> <p>Level 7: Normal in all situations Normal diet No strategies or extra time needed</p> <p>Level 6: Within functional limits/modified independence Normal diet, functional swallow Patient may have mild oral or pharyngeal delay, retention or trace epiglottal undercoating but independently and spontaneously compensates/clears May need extra time for meal Have no aspiration or penetration across consistencies</p> <p>Full P.O: Modified diet and/or independence</p>
<p>Level 5: Mild dysphagia: Distant supervision, may need one diet consistency restricted May exhibit one or more of the following Aspiration of thin liquids only but with strong reflexive cough to clear completely Airway penetration midway to cords with one or more consistency or to cords with one consistency but clears spontaneously Retention in pharynx that is cleared spontaneously Mild oral dysphagia with reduced mastication and/or oral retention that is cleared spontaneously</p> <p>Level 4: Mild–moderate dysphagia: Intermittent supervision/cueing, one or two consistencies restricted May exhibit one or more of the following Retention in pharynx cleared with cue Retention in the oral cavity that is cleared with cue Aspiration with one consistency, with weak or no reflexive cough Or airway penetration to the level of the vocal cords with cough with two consistencies Or airway penetration to the level of the vocal cords without cough with one consistency</p> <p>Level 3: Moderate dysphagia: Total assist, supervision, or strategies, two or more diet consistencies restricted May exhibit one or more of the following Moderate retention in pharynx, cleared with cue Moderate retention in oral cavity, cleared with cue Airway penetration to the level of the vocal cords without cough with two or more consistencies Or aspiration with two consistencies, with weak or no reflexive cough Or aspiration with one consistency, no cough and airway penetration to cords with one, no cough</p>
<p>Nonoral nutrition necessary</p> <hr/> <p>Level 2: Moderately severe dysphagia: Maximum assistance or use of strategies with partial P.O. only (tolerates at least one consistency safely with total use of strategies) May exhibit one or more of the following Severe retention in pharynx, unable to clear or needs multiple cues Severe oral stage bolus loss or retention, unable to clear or needs multiple cues Aspiration with two or more consistencies, no reflexive cough, weak volitional cough Or aspiration with one or more consistency, no cough and airway penetration to cords with one or more consistency, no cough</p> <p>Level 1: Severe dysphagia: NPO: Unable to tolerate any P.O. safely May exhibit one or more of the following Severe retention in pharynx, unable to clear Severe oral stage bolus loss or retention, unable to clear Silent aspiration with two or more consistencies, nonfunctional volitional cough Or unable to achieve swallow</p>

