

Dysphagia outcome and severity scale—DOSS

Level 7: Normal in all situations

- Normal diet
- No strategies or extra time needed

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
- Full P.O: Modified diet and/or independence

Level 5: Mild dysphagia: Distant supervision, may need one diet consistency restricted

- 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

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 caught with one consistency

Level 3: Moderate dysphagia: Total assist, supervision, or strategies, two or more diet consistencies restricted

- 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
- Nonoral nutrition necessary

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

Level 1: Severe dysphagia: NPO: Unable to tolerate any P.O. safely

- 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