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HOME PROGRAM: Oral-Motor Exercise Benefits for Swallowing

Benefits of Oral-Motor Exercises for Adults with Acquired Swallowing Difficulties – For patients/family members/caregivers

You have been assigned oral-motor exercises due to a swallowing disorder/dysphagia. Please perform these daily, to receive the full benefit.

Below is a listing of the purpose and benefits of performing oral-motor exercises:

- building muscle strength for the benefit of improving movements for the oral and oro/pharyngeal phases of swallowing
- improving range of motion in order for aiding in improvements in oral function
- improve control of slow movements
- improve control for chewing (mastication), managing the bolus (bolus cohesion and anterior-posterior transport), and maintaining liquids to remain in the cavity and not spill over into the back of the throat prematurely.

Tips for performing oral-motor exercises to improve swallowing:

- Set time aside each day for about 20 minutes to perform the oral-motor exercises.
- Sit in front of a mirror to receive visual feedback when performing the exercises.
- Take drinks or provide moisture between sets of exercises to keep the mouth hydrated.
- A good time to perform the exercises is before or after tooth brushing or oral care.
- Pace yourself, take breaks if needed.
- Including others in performing the oral-motor exercises is beneficial for motivation.
- Reminders of the benefits of oral-motor exercises on swallowing will help maintain motivation.

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