



# Resourceful Thinking

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## DYSPHAGIA; SCAMS; SUMMER TIPS; UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

### SWALLOWING DISORDER: DYSPHAGIA

Dysphagia is a disorder that impairs a person's ability to swallow which can lead to serious complications: aspiration pneumonia, malnutrition, dehydration, choking, and death can result.

Aspiration pneumonia occurs when material (food, liquids, saliva, vomit) enter the airway. This is termed "aspiration". If 'bad bacteria' is introduced into the lower respiratory system, pneumonia can result. The dysphagia can be a result of stroke, nervous system disorders such as Parkinson's and cerebral palsy, GERD, head or spinal cord injury, dementia, and cancer of the head, neck or esophagus. Those with dementia often pouch their food or pocket it in their cheeks (which can lead to aspiration). They may need reminded or cued to swallow, and/or may need dietary changes.

Those who have a compromised immune system are more likely for an aspiration to result in pneumonia.

Dysphagia is an independent risk factor for aspiration pneumonia, and is a leading cause of hospital readmissions. The Journals of Gerontology looked at the risk of hospital readmission for dysphagia patients, and found an 80% risk of readmission for pneumonia and a 400% increased risk of readmission for aspiration pneumonia.

So – what steps can be taken to help? Being proactive with infection prevention can help. A good oral care program can possibly save people from a hospital readmission. Effective oral care – with a toothbrush – can prevent overgrowth of harmful bacteria and stimulate saliva flow. This is important for those who live at home and those who are in a facility. Educating families and staff about

the importance of oral care is another proactive step.

If there is a change in the ability to swallow, consult with the physician. He or she may make a referral to an otolaryngologist—a doctor who specializes in diseases of the ear, nose, throat, head, and neck—and a speech-language pathologist. There may also be a referral to a neurologist if a stroke or other neurologic disorder is the cause of the swallowing problem.

[Sources: Provider, July 2019, "Proper Oral Care Can Reduce Risk of Pneumonia"; Medline Plus, <https://medlineplus.gov/swallowingdisorders.htm>; National Institute on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders, <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/dysphagia>]

### MORE ON SCAMS

There are a few more out there! One is the Social Security scam. The callers tell us, due to improper or illegal activity with a citizen's Social Security number (SSN) or account, a citizen will be arrested or face other legal action if they fail to call a provided phone number to address the issue. This is a scam; citizens should not engage with these calls or provide any personal information.

SSA employees do contact citizens, generally those who have ongoing business with SSA, by telephone for customer-service purposes. However, SSA employees will never threaten you for information; they will not state that you face potential arrest or other legal action if you fail to provide information. In those cases, the call is fraudulent, and you should just hang up. Do not call the number that the scammer provides. If you want to contact Social Security to check on the validity of a contact, call SSA at 1 800 772-1213. Do NOT call the number provided by the scammer!!

WV Attorney General Patrick Morrissey has recently alerted consumers to a 'sweepstakes scam'. Scammers tell consumers that they have won a lottery or sweepstakes, but that they must pay the taxes or fees upfront in order to collect the prize. Those who send money lose it, as the scammer disappears and the winnings never arrive.

Most sweepstakes including Publishers Clearing House, state lotteries and government agencies do not require winners to pay money to receive their prize, so potential winners should never agree to send cash, wire money or provide numbers associated with a credit/debit card or bank account. Furthermore, Publishers Clearing House does not notify winners by phone, but instead by in-person visit or certified mail.

Winning a sweepstakes the consumer didn't enter, being asked to pay upfront fees or taxes and being pressured to act immediately should all be red flags that a win might not be legitimate.

Scammers use the telephone to reach their potential victims very frequently. Any number of approaches may be tried: they may say that your credit card has been compromised, there is an order pending from some company, your SSN is attached to an illegal activity, you've won a prize, and on it goes!

There will be times when these scammers become aggressive. Here are some tips on how to handle the discussion.

- The best policy is to ignore these calls and do not answer if you do not recognize the number.
- If you do answer you can always hang up at any time or refuse to give information once you determine it is a caller you do not recognize.
- Keep in mind that these scammers can "spoof" a number which means that it looks like the call is coming from someone you know.
- Do not engage! Once you realize it is a scam call do not encourage these scammers. These are criminals and you want to remain as disengaged as possible.
- Don't think you need to be polite. Hang up.
- If you are threatened or feel as though you are in immediate danger call 911 and report your situation to law enforcement.

- NEVER provide any personal information over the phone and never "confirm" your personal information to anyone requesting it over the phone.
- If you are asked a 'yes' question, answer 'correct' instead of 'yes' so scammers can't manipulate your 'yes' into an acceptance of some offering.

Those of you who are frequent readers of Resourceful Thinking have seen my cautionary tales in past newsletters. Please pay attention and exercise caution. More people are falling prey to these scammers and the scammers are getting more belligerent. They want access to information, and will use threats and intimidation. Don't fall for it. Be a wise consumer!

Consumer Reports gives us information on the top summer scams at <https://www.consumerreports.org/scams-fraud/summer-scams-to-avoid/>.

For more tips, go to your state's attorney general's office website. If you have been scammed, call your state's attorney general, the Federal Trade Commission, the police, and/or the FBI.

[Sources: Office of the Inspector General, Social Security Administration, <https://oig.ssa.gov/newsroom/scam-awareness>; WV Attorney General's Office, <https://ago.wv.gov/consumerprotection/Pages/Senior-Protection.aspx>; 'AG Morrissey Warns of Sweepstakes Scam', Wheeling News Register, July 13, 2019 ]

### IT'S SUMMER! TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

Thank heavens – it's summer! We can get out in the sunshine, enjoy hiking, dog walks, boating and vacation...and more!

There are lots of opportunities for fun activities but there are also lots of opportunities for problems.

- Sunburn – Make sure to wear sunscreen and apply again after being in the water. Don't go out in the mid-day sun.
- Dehydration – Drink a lot of fluid, especially water. It's easy to get dehydrated when out in the sun.
- Lawn mower accidents – Make sure the mower is off and the blades have

stopped if you need to clean the machine. Wear closed toe shoes.

- Boating accidents – Don't drink while boating. Make sure everyone has a flotation device – even your dogs!
- Ticks and mosquitoes – Use insect repellent. Tick borne illnesses are more prevalent, and can cause a number of illnesses. Wear long sleeves and long pants when hiking, and make sure your pants are tucked in.
- Food poisoning – Keep foods with mayonnaise, eggs and meat cold.
- Heat stroke – again, watch the mid-day sun. Stay hydrated. Rest in the shade. If you suspect heat stroke, call 911 immediately.
- Check on your older family and neighbors!

Enjoy the time outside but be cautious!

### UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Here are the upcoming workshops in 2019.

*\*The Impact & Opportunities of Medication Adherence* with Jason Turner, RPh on September 17, from 9am-11am

*\*Modern Workplace Practices* with Zach Abraham on October 15, from 9am-11am

\*a Veterans program will be held in November, details to be announced.

Each workshop will offer two CEU credits for social workers through Bethany College (490052) for a fee of \$10.00.

Additional information will be available on our website and on our Facebook page. *Bethany College is sending emails on the workshops, and will be taking registrations for the September and October workshops.*

### CAREGIVER RETREAT SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER

Marty Cornett (MC Wellness Coaching) and Altenheim Resource Services will be hosting a retreat in September for caregivers. We will be focusing on caregiving, stress, self-awareness, and what caregivers can do to take care of themselves. There will be a fee for the retreat and lunch and materials will be included. This will be a day for caregivers to have some time for themselves! We are working out the details now. Contact me to be placed on the list for more information!

### SAVE THE DATE

Our workshop committee is working to develop a Spring Symposium for 2020. This will be a one-day program offering area professionals information on "What's In Your Professional Toolbox?" and will be held in March, 2020. Keep an eye out for details!

### THANKS TO OUR PRESENTERS!

Thanks to J.T. Hunter, Physician's Outreach Specialist with the WV Alzheimer's Association for the presentation in observance of The Longest Day on June 25. J.T. included several personal stories of his caregiving while educating us about communication and dementia-related behaviors.

Thanks to Kathy Shelek-Furbee, M.S.W., Social Work Dept. Chair at Bethany College for the workshop on The Ethics Audit. Kathy made ethics interesting!

### ADULT SERVICES COALITIONS

There are numerous opportunities for professionals to meet, network and learn about area services and programs. Group meetings are held in Belmont County, Jefferson County, Guernsey County and Columbiana County in Ohio and in Marshall County, Ohio County, and Hancock/Brooke County in West Virginia. Contact me for information.

### RESOURCEFUL THINKING

Please contact me at 304 243-0996 or email me at [akoegler1995@gmail.com](mailto:akoegler1995@gmail.com) for any needed changes. You can also access the newsletter on our website.

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Let us be Your Gateway to Care for Older Adults!  
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8am – 4pm

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