

What is an ENT Speech-Language Pathologist (ENT SLP)?

A speech-language pathologist (SLP) evaluates and treats problems with swallowing, voice and cognition (the ability to understand). An ear, nose and throat (ENT) SLP works with head and neck cancer patients.

Treatment such as surgery, radiation and/or chemotherapy can cause changes to the structures, tissues and muscles of your head and neck. This may affect your ability to swallow, talk, communicate and think clearly.

Your ENT SLP will provide education and evaluate you to make a treatment plan to follow before, during and after your cancer treatment. You may see an ENT SLP during clinic or when you are in the hospital.

An ENT SLP may help you with the following:

- Swallowing problems
- Speech and voice changes
- Problems with understanding and ability to think clearly

Evaluation and Treatment for Swallowing Problems

Before you start treatment, your ENT SLP may evaluate your ability to swallow to see how your muscles work. Your ENT SLP will work with you to make a treatment plan that may include swallowing exercises for you to use during treatment. They will also evaluate your ability to swallow during and after treatment. If needed, your treatment plan may be adjusted to help manage these problems.

To evaluate your ability to swallow, your ENT SLP may order one of the following tests:

- Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)
- Modified Barium Swallow (MBS)

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.