



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Health PEI

STROKE DISTINCTION: SWALLOWING SCREENS

The Acute Stroke Services and Inpatient Stroke Rehabilitation Services Standards outline the requirement for **screening** and documenting a client's swallowing ability using a validated bedside testing protocol as part of the initial assessment and prior to initiating oral intake of medications, fluids, or food.

STROKE SPECIFIC SCREENING TOOL (TOR-BSST)

The TOR-BSST is a swallowing **screening tool** validated **ONLY** for patients with stroke and is used at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and Prince County Hospital (PCH). This screening tool is administered by a healthcare provider trained in the administration of the screening tool.

Abnormal results from the swallowing screen (TOR-BSST) prompt a **referral to a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) for a swallowing assessment.**

SWALLOWING SCREENS VERSUS. SWALLOWING ASSESSMENTS

It is important to understand the difference between **swallowing screens and assessments.**

Swallowing Screen (screening is used to detect potential health disorders, e.g. dysphagia):

- Patients who have had a stroke should be screened for swallowing deficits within the first 24 hours of admission to hospital using a valid screening tool. Patients who are not initially alert should be screened when clinically appropriate.
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) is not always obvious and aspiration (liquids or solids drop below the vocal folds at the top of the airway) can occur "silently."

Swallowing Assessment:

- A bedside swallowing assessment is **completed by the SLP only.**
- The SLP will formally evaluate patient's swallowing function to determine safety for oral intake.
- Based on results of the bedside swallowing assessment, the SLP will determine the need for a Modified Barium Swallow (MBS). An MBS is an x-ray study that evaluates oropharyngeal (mouth and throat) swallowing function.

Questions Surveyors May Ask Staff:

What is your role in swallowing screening?

What education have you received?

How do patients and partners in care receive information regarding swallowing difficulties?

Please contact provincialstrokecoordinator@ihis.org for more information.