



The Value of Prophylactic Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) Services in the Treatment of Head and Neck Cancer



Head and neck cancer treatments can have long-lasting impacts on swallowing. Prehabilitative SLP services can lessen side effects and improve functional outcomes.

SLP interdisciplinary care prior to cancer treatment leads to...



Decreased costs and fewer adverse events

- \$18,754 reduction in individual healthcare costs¹
- 30% less likely to have unplanned re-admissions²
- 76% less likely to have re-admissions related to stomal or tracheoesophageal puncture complications²
- 61% less likely to experience postoperative complications¹
- 40% reduction in overall mortality risk³



Increased knowledge, preparedness, and treatment adherence

- 80%-91% of individuals undergoing total laryngectomy improved knowledge and preparedness for surgery.²
- Patients were approximately **13 times** more likely to adhere to SLP treatment recommendations.⁴

Proactive SLP treatment and assessment leads to...



Decreased feeding tube dependency

- 32%-96% less likely to require a feeding tube at completion of treatment⁶⁻⁹
- 70%-81% less likely to have a feeding tube at 3-6 months following cancer treatment^{10,11}
- Feeding tube removal **12-16 weeks** sooner^{12,13}



Improved swallow function and oral intake

- **4 times** more likely to improve swallowing efficiency⁸
- **36%** more likely to achieve a functional swallow⁹
- **3-4 times** more likely to eat a solid oral diet^{8,10,14}
- **4 times** more likely to maintain improvements in oral diet¹⁰



The earlier, the better

When speech-language pathologists intervene prior to the initiation of cancer treatment, patients are able to resume oral diets and eliminate feeding tubes **11 days** sooner than those seen after the start of cancer treatment.⁵

Additional benefits of prehabilitative SLP treatment...



25% less likely to miss radiation sessions.¹⁵



Improved Swallowing-Related Quality of Life^{16,17}



Improved Saliva Production, Smell, and Taste⁸



Maintained Weight¹⁵

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