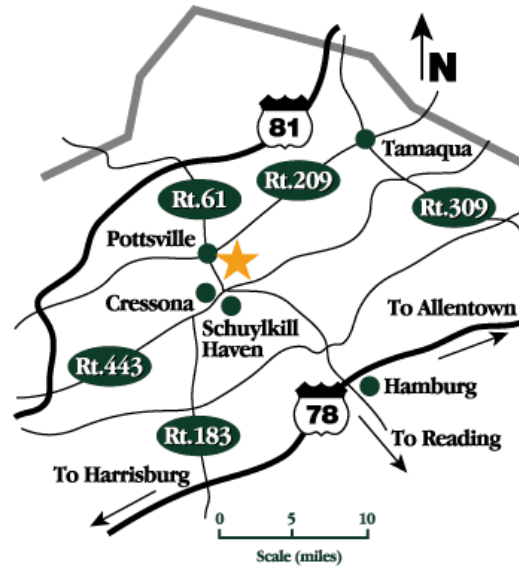


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**VITALSTIM
THERAPY FOR
SWALLOWING
DISORDERS**

WHAT IS VITALSTIM THERAPY?

VitalStim therapy is an innovative, ground-breaking treatment for those people suffering from a swallowing disorder. VitalStim utilizes a specialized neuromuscular electrical stimulation system to exercise the muscles we use to swallow. VitalStim therapy was approved by the FDA in June of 2001 and is a non-invasive, relatively painless treatment. The research results of VitalStim therapy report a success rate of 71% when used with patient's whose swallowing disorder involves aspiration. Success rates are higher for those who do not experience aspiration. The usual course of treatment is six to twenty sessions to achieve improvement in swallowing abilities. VitalStim Therapy does require a prescription by a physician.

An estimated 15 million people in the United States suffer from swallowing disorders each year. 1 in 17 people will develop some form of swallowing disorder in their lifetime

WHAT CAUSES SWALLOWING DISORDERS?

A swallowing disorder can be caused by: stroke, traumatic brain injury, developmental abnormalities, surgical excisions, degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease and Lou Gehrig's disease, and many other medical conditions. Swallowing disorder patients experience personal discomfort and a drastic reduction in the quality of their lifestyles.

SYMPTOMS OF SWALLOWING DISORDER

- Watery eyes at meals
- Reddening of face
- Coughing/choking
- Gagging
- Throat clearing
- Gurgly voice
- Voice changes
- Complaint of something sticking in the throat
- Complaint of fullness in throat
- Breathing changes or difficulty breathing
- Facial grimacing with swallowing
- Chest pain/high or low back pain
- Pain with swallowing
- Dependency on feeding tubes

If you experience these symptoms, it is important that you seek medical advice as soon as possible. The aspiration of food or liquids can cause pneumonia. Choking on foods can lead to an acute medical emergency requiring Heimlich maneuver and CPR.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP IF YOU SUSPECT A SWALLOWING DISORDER?

If you suspect that you might have a swallowing disorder, contact your physician for an assessment. Only through diagnostic testing, can the type and cause of your swallowing difficulty, be determined. If a problem is identified VitalStim Therapy may be needed.

If VitalStim Therapy is indicated, a specialized swallowing study via a videofluoroscopy will be requested. The results of this specialized swallowing study will provide specific information in relation to your particular swallowing problem. This information will determine the specialized VitalStim Therapy techniques to be used.

For additional information or coordination of services contact:

**Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center
(570)621-9500**

e-mail: schrehab@comcast.net