



A hard disorder to swallow

CHEWING on a juicy piece of steak is a simple pleasure for most, but not so when you have a swallowing disorder.

Sandringham Hospital speech pathologist Lydia Cvejic is shedding light this week on her profession's role in helping people with swallowing disorders, as part of Speech Pathology Week.

"Every day we swallow food and drink without a second thought,"

she said. "However, this crucial function can be a daily struggle for some Australians.

"The condition, called dysphagia, involves difficulty swallowing food, liquid and/or saliva."

More than 200 people were diagnosed at the hospital last year with dysphagia, which can be life-threatening in severe cases.

The condition commonly occurs in association with neurological and

respiratory disorders, such as dementia and chronic lung disease.

Ms Cvejic said it was also estimated to affect up to 70 per cent of premature babies and 50 per cent of stroke patients.

Treatments were available and concerned residents should contact their GP, Ms Cvejic said.

» **Details: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au.**



Christina Pearce with speech pathologist Lydia Cvejic.