



Bubs, stroke patients find it hard to swallow

SWALLOWING for most is something which comes as easy as breathing or blinking.

But Ipswich Hospital speech pathologist Carlye Ghidella said swallowing disorders, formally called dysphagia, affected up to 70 per cent of premature babies and 50 per cent of all stroke patients.

"In adults, dysphagia may result from a number of conditions including cancer, stroke or neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease," Ms Ghidella said.

As part of Speech Pathology Week, which runs until Sunday, the theme is Feeding and Swallowing – it's no choking matter.

Ms Ghidella wants to make the community aware of the disorder and the places to go for help.

"Dysphagia can be frightening for people, especially when they don't know why it's happening," Ms Ghidella said.

In extreme cases, dysphagia causes life-threatening chest infections.

FAST FACTS

- The average person swallows 1200 times a day. Each time, 25 different muscles are used.
- About five per cent of the general population has some degree of swallowing impairment.
- We swallow one litre of saliva a day.



SPEAK EASY: Ipswich speech pathologist Carlye Ghidella.

Photo: Rob Williams JL2307WB

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