

# Media release

Tuesday 16 March 2021

## Swallowing in the spotlight: Discussing dysphagia and medicines safety

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is highlighting the impact of swallowing difficulty on medicines safety, and the mitigating message of its leading [Don't Rush to Crush](#) publication, ahead of tomorrow's [Swallowing Awareness Day 2021](#), an initiative of Speech Pathology Australia.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says dysphagia has profound implications for the safe use of medicines.

'On behalf of our members we're proud to get behind [#SwallowAware2021](#) and raise awareness around the difficulties of a dysphagia diagnosis, which encompasses any problem with swallowing, drinking, chewing, eating, controlling saliva, taking medication, or protecting the lungs from food and drink.

'This is particularly important to pharmacists, who can advise whether a suitable alternative is available or whether it is safe to crush or disperse a medicine.

'SHPA's [Don't Rush to Crush](#), recognised as a required pharmacy text by the Pharmacy Board of Australia, answers these questions, providing vital information at the point of care in hospitals, pharmacies and residential aged care facilities to ensure the safe and effective use of medicines for people with swallowing difficulties.'

Tim Kittel, National President of Speech Pathology Australia, says like breathing, swallowing is essential to everyday life.

'Humans swallow at between 500-700 times a day, around three times an hour during sleep, once per minute while awake and even more during meals.

'Around one million Australians have a swallowing difficulty. Swallowing problems can occur at any stage of life. However, the knowledge of dysphagia and its implications remain largely unknown for most Australians.

'We welcome SHPA's support of Swallowing Awareness Day 2021. It is an opportunity to bring attention to swallowing disorders and to connect people with speech pathologists, the professionals who can help.'

The third edition of [Don't Rush to Crush](#) is now available through the [SHPA Bookshop](#), [eMIMSCloud](#) and [MIMS Online](#), and Medical Director's [AusDI](#).

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**About SHPA**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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