



VitalStim Therapy Fact Sheet

What is it?	VitalStim is a new treatment program for patients who have dysphagia (dis fay zha).
What is dysphagia?	Dysphagia is difficulty or discomfort when swallowing. It ranges from mild discomfort to complete inability to swallow.
Who does it affect?	An estimated 15 million Americans suffer from this disorder. 75 percent of stroke victims and approximately 90 percent of patients with neurological disorder are affected.
How does it affect patients' lives?	Eating is one of our basic necessities. We swallow, on average, 2000 times each day without giving it any thought. Losing the ability to swallow, and thus to eat, can negatively affect a patient psychologically and socially.
How does VitalStim Work?	VitalStim Therapy uses a small current to stimulate inactive or atrophied swallowing muscles. At the same time, a Speech Language Therapist administers rehabilitation therapy to help re-educate the muscles. VitalStim Therapy is painless and non-invasive.
Who administers it?	A physician prescribes VitalStim and it is administered by specially trained Speech Language Therapists who have at least three years of experience treating dysphagia. CJW Medical Center began offering VitalStim Therapy in November 2004.
Does it work?	In clinical trials that compared the effectiveness of VitalStim Therapy to traditional thermal-tactile stimulation, the results were excellent, even with patients with long-term dysphagia. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 98 percent improved swallow function score▪ 38 percent of patients with severe dysphagia retained full normal swallow function▪ At their three-year follow up, over 76 percent had retained swallow function
Is it safe?	VitalStim Therapy is approved by the FDA.
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