

Skilled Nursing Facility: Frail Patient, Recurrent Pneumonia

“Bernice”

AGE: 81 years

ENVIRONMENT: Skilled Nursing Facility

DIAGNOSIS: Recurrent pneumonia, congestive heart failure, generalized weakness, renal insufficiency, history of stroke

Bernice was referred to Speech Pathology for evaluation and treatment secondary to signs and symptoms of aspiration at mealtime (e.g., coughing/choking) and recurring episodes of pneumonia. Her baseline diet was **mechanical soft solids and nectar-thick liquids**. Her therapist noted that her liquid intake was reduced on thickened liquids and that the patient was “not at all happy” about having to eat/drink a modified diet.

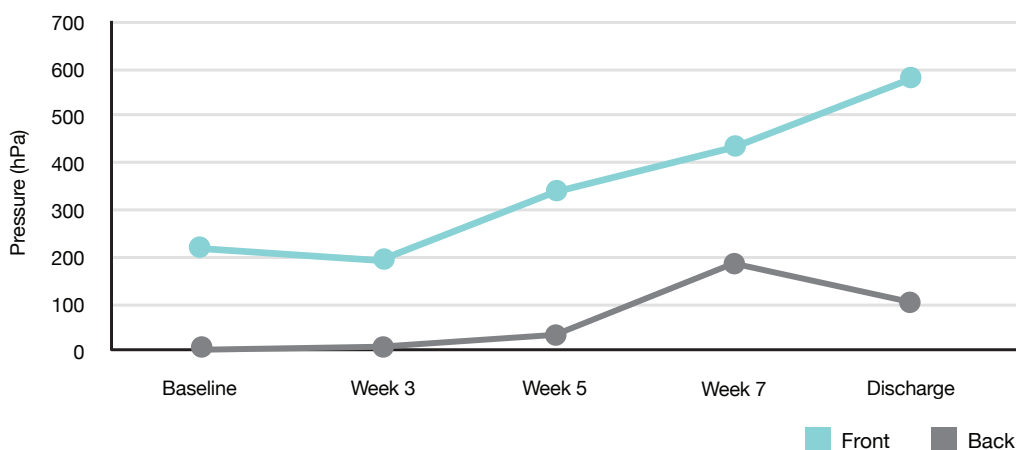
THERAPY COURSE

Bernice’s therapist initiated a course of oropharyngeal strengthening facilitated by the SwallowSTRONG device. Bernice completed lingual strengthening sessions 5-6 times per week for eight weeks focusing on the front and back portions of the tongue. By the fourth week, her swallowing was re-evaluated and her diet was upgraded to **regular solids with thin liquids**.

OUTCOMES

- **Strength:** Bernice increased the strength of her tongue (front and back).
- **Diet:** After several months of drinking thickened liquids, Bernice returned to a full regular diet with thin liquids.
- **Quality of Life:** Bernice would “root for herself” using the visual display on the SwallowSTRONG device for guidance and, per her therapist, is much happier on a regular diet.
- **Health:** Bernice has been pneumonia-free for four months.

Maximum Tongue Pressures (Isometric)



Maximum isometric lingual pressures increased at the front and back of tongue.