

## Skilled Nursing Facility: Moderate Dementia

*“Felicia”*

**AGE:** 76 years

**ENVIRONMENT:** Skilled Nursing Facility

**DIAGNOSIS:** Dementia; score on Montreal Cognitive Assessment<sup>1</sup> (MoCA) = 9 (significant cognitive deficits)

Felicia was referred to Speech Pathology for evaluation and treatment of swallowing and cognitive decline. Her baseline diet was **mechanical soft solids and thin liquids** although she was noted to cough frequently when drinking thin liquids.

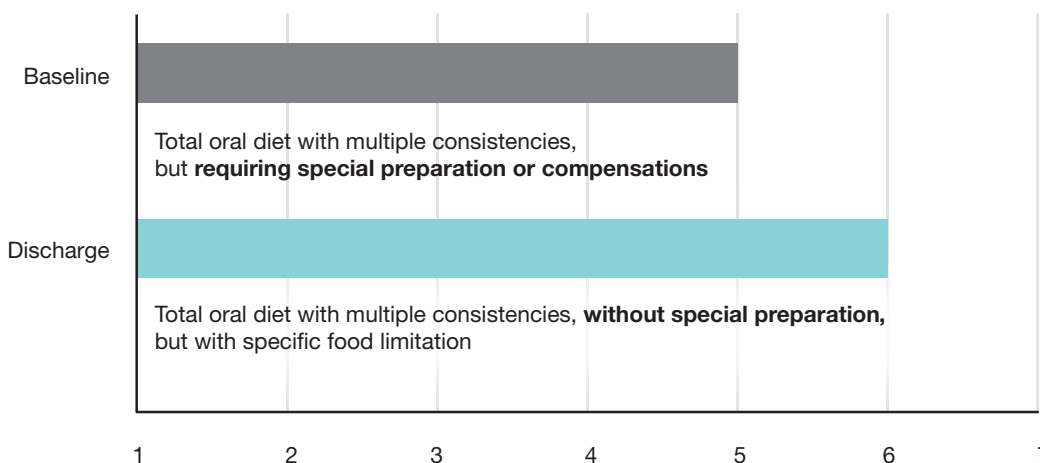
### THERAPY COURSE

Felicia’s therapist initiated a course of oropharyngeal strengthening using the SwallowSTRONG device. They worked together for four weeks with the training screen, which provided visual feedback of lingual pressure generation as a waveform — the harder Felicia pushed with her tongue, the higher the waveform line would move. Felicia completed strengthening sessions 6 times per week (2 times per day on three days per week) focusing on the front portion of the tongue. The clinician used verbal and visual cuing to facilitate therapy. After four weeks, Felicia’s swallowing was re-evaluated and her diet was upgraded. The clinician noted that although her cognition declined over the four-week period, she was still able to complete tasks and make gains in swallowing safety.

### OUTCOMES

- **Diet:** Felicia’s diet was upgraded to **regular solids**, and she no longer coughed when drinking thin liquids.
- **Quality of Life:** Felicia was pleased to be eating “regular” food.

Functional Oral Intake Scale Score



Functional Oral Intake Scale<sup>2</sup> scores at baseline and after four weeks of lingual strengthening therapy.

<sup>1</sup> Freitas S, Simões MR, Alves L, Santana I. Montreal cognitive assessment: validation study for mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer disease. *Alzheimer Dis Assoc Disord.* 2013;27(1):37-43.

<sup>2</sup> Crary MA, Mann GD, Groher ME. Initial psychometric assessment of a functional oral intake scale for dysphagia in stroke patients. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil.* 2005;86(8):1516-1520.