

# Questions to ask about Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) services

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ALS can impact your speech, cognition, and swallowing abilities. A Speech-Language Pathologist or Therapist (SLP) may be part of your ALS care team, or you may choose to seek out an outpatient or home health SLP. SLPs may be able to provide support to help communication. They can also evaluate and provide ongoing support for cognitive changes and swallowing issues. Below are questions that may be helpful to ask a SLP. We have also included frequently asked questions and answers. This document was created in collaboration with SLPs employed by I AM ALS, Bridging Voice, and Team Gleason.

These questions may be answered over a series of visits. There is often a lot of information to absorb during a clinic visit. Take a family member or friend with you who can take notes, and ask your care team whether you can record your visit so you can listen to their answers and advice again at a later time.

If you're seeking additional information and resources related to these topics, please visit our Frequently Asked Questions about ALS page at <https://iamals.org/get-help/frequently-asked-questions-about-als/>.

**Provider Name:** .....

**Provider Contact Information:** .....

## Questions to ask about swallowing

1. How can I manage excess saliva?

2. Why is oral care and dental hygiene important when living with ALS?

3. What should I do if I notice that I'm coughing and/or choking when eating or drinking?

4. How do I know when a food or drink is no longer safe to consume?

5. Are there steps to modifying my diet or the way I eat prior to getting a feeding tube?

6. Will I need to get a feeding tube eventually? (Note: [these questions](#) about feeding tubes may be helpful to ask your healthcare team.)

7. Can I still continue eating or drinking by mouth if I choose to get a feeding tube?

### Questions to ask about communication

1. Are there ways to help me communicate without using technology?

2. Are there any mouth/facial exercises I can do to help me to keep talking instead of using a communication device?

3. How do I get the attention of my family member or caregiver if I'm having trouble talking?

4. How can I prepare myself, and my family and friends for upcoming changes to my speech?

## Questions to ask about communication technology

1. If/when the time comes, can I expect you to help me explore different types of communication technology? Are you able to assist me with message banking, voice banking, and/or “Double Dipping?”

- a. If not, can you recommend an outpatient or home health SLP to help with this?

2. How will I know when it’s time to look for a device to help me communicate?

3. If I decide to use a communication device or a communication App, who will teach me how to use it?

4. What is the process like for obtaining a high-tech communication device through my insurance company, Medicaid, or Medicare

5. What if I don't have insurance, have a large copay, or don't have coverage to get a communication device through insurance? Are there organizations that can provide a loaner communication device?

6. How would I use a communication device if I can't use my arms and hands?

7. Is there assistive technology that could be helpful if I can speak clearly but my hands and arms aren't able to use my current technology (phone, computer, tablet, etc)?

### Questions to ask about cognition and memory

1. If I notice that I'm not thinking or remembering as well as I used to, are you able to provide any support with this?

2. What are some changes in my thinking that I may notice that would prompt me to contact a SLP?

3. My mind feels frazzled. What are some strategies to help me stay organized with appointments, visits, tests etc?

**Write down other questions you have:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

*I AM ALS does not provide medical advice. Please discuss questions and decisions related to your diagnosis and medical care with your health care team.*