



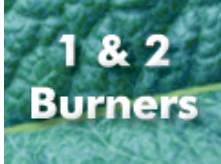
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# Electric brain stimulation improves swallowing dysfunction in stroke patients, study says

March 30, 2011

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Electrical brain stimulation has been shown to help recent stroke patients who have difficulty with swallowing after a stroke, according to researchers at [Duke University Medical Center's Stroke Center](#).

Investigators evaluated 14 patients who had experienced a stroke between one and 10 days prior to trial enrolment, and who had been treated at [Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center](#) in Boston. The Duke scientists placed electrodes on the patients' scalps to mildly stimulate the brain, with the goal being to stimulate different areas of the brain. The stimulation helped 86% of the patients have an easier time swallowing, compared to 43% who did not experience an improvement.

"Post-stroke swallowing difficulty is an important problem. Up to half of stroke patients studied have dysfunctional swallowing, and up to a third of these patients aspirate, swallowing material that enters the windpipe rather than going into the stomach," said Dr. Larry B. Goldstein, director of the Duke Stroke Center. "This can cause pneumonia, which can prolong hospitalization, interfere with recovery or increase the chances of dying."

The study was published in the online version of the [journal Stroke](#) on March 24.

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