

Dysphagia Treatment Benefits Patient

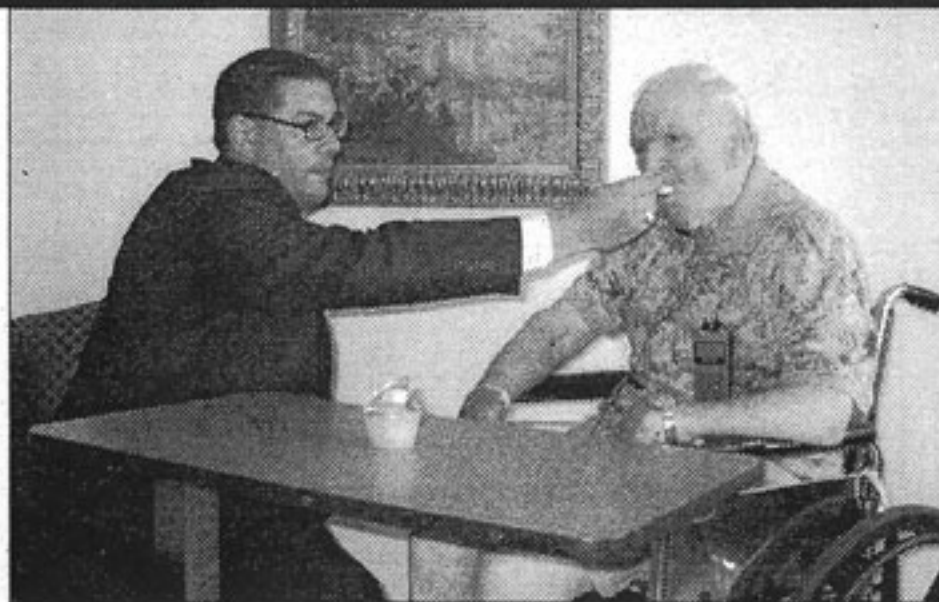
For more than three years following a stroke, Eugene Kruszewski, 79, was unable to eat solid foods. However, with the help of a determined speech-language pathologist and state-of-the-art technology at the Island Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, in Holtsville, NY, he is now on a solid diet and enjoying the diversity, smell and taste of various foods.

Following his stroke, Kruszewski was placed in a Florida nursing home, where he was fed via a gastric tube. After moving back to Long Island with his wife, he was admitted to the Island Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

Steven Asofsky, MA, CCC-SLP, supervisor of speech pathology at the rehab center, met with Kruszewski upon his admission.

"[He] was suffering many losses following his stroke but was incredibly determined to eat solid food," Asofsky stated. "He was given several barium swallowing tests and was unable to meet the requirement for safe swallowing of solid foods."

Asofsky incorporated a dysphagia treatment device in his therapy with Kruszewski. Targeting weakened swallowing



Steven Asofsky, director of speech therapy at Island Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, provides VitalStim® treatment therapy to resident Eugene Kruszewski.

muscles that can become atrophied and rigid after a prolonged period of time, VitalStim® provides neuromuscular electric stimulation to strengthen and re-educate the muscles. The stimulation can enable patients to once again swallow solid foods.

After intensive therapy of three to four sessions per week over a three-month period, Kruszewski was able to progress to pureed food and then solids.

His wife, Evelyn, stated, "My husband worked very hard, as did his speech therapist. Eugene now has such an en-

hanced quality of life."