Swallowing fish bones is a common accident here – and uniquely so, doctors say. It ranks as the top referral from emergency departments to ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctors at three major public hospitals here – ahead of problems like nose bleeds and breathing difficulties.

A recently published study by local doctors has now crystallised three factors for this occurrence. Wearing dentures, using utensils to eat fish – instead of using fingers – and the habit of “deboning” the fish in the mouth were linked to a higher risk of ingesting fish bones.

Nearly 40 per cent put the boned fish in their mouth and used their tongue and teeth to separate the flesh from the sharp bones. Other factors, such as vision problems, gender and age, were not found to be significant.

Researchers believe that wearing dentures is a key risk factor as wearing them impairs one’s ability to sense fish bones and spit them out in time.

Using the fingers to eat fish may also be a lifesaver, as it enables one to feel sharp bones more easily. It’s a common emergency in Singapore, as people ‘debone’ fish in their mouth instead of using their fingers.
The tactic advantage gained when using fingers may also apply to the removal of small fish bones. The advantage gained here is that the fingers can be used to locate and remove the bone easily. This advantage gained is possible because the fingers can be used to locate and remove the bone easily. This advantage gained is possible because the fingers can be used to locate and remove the bone easily. This advantage gained is possible because the fingers can be used to locate and remove the bone easily. This advantage gained is possible because the fingers can be used to locate and remove the bone easily.