

# Dysarthria

An information guide



# Dysarthria

## What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a motor speech disorder. It results in weakness or loss of control of the muscles used in speaking.

Consequently your speech may sound:

- Slurred.
- Have a nasal quality.
- Quiet.
- Hoarse.
- Slow and effortful.
- Different, for example, changes to your pitch or intonation.

## General advice that may help you communicate better

- Sit/stand upright with good posture.
- Speak more slowly and see if it helps.
- Say fewer words on each breath.
- Break up long words e.g. tel-e-vi-sion.
- Face the person you are speaking to.
- Make sure the room is well lit.
- Reduce background noise as much as possible eg turn the TV/ radio off.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Remember writing, drawing and gestures may help to get your message across.
- 'Think loud' raise the volume!
- Tell the listener what topic you are talking about.
- You may find talking more difficult when you are tired.
- Try not to get frustrated if the listener does not understand you first time. Try again or rephrase what you said.

## Help for family members

Useful tips for communicating with your family member with dysarthria:

- Give the person more time to talk and do not interrupt.
- Reduce background noise as much as possible e.g. turn TV/ radio off.
- Your relative may find it more difficult to talk in a group situation, and may need more support to join in.
- Make sure the room is well lit.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Accept and encourage all means of communication, e.g. facial expression, drawing, gesture, pointing, writing, speech, tone of voice etc.
- Have a pen and paper.
- Be honest and say if you don't understand.
- If you don't understand ask questions that can be answered with a yes/no, or try again later.
- Be patient as it may not be easy for either of you.
- Difficulty communicating may lead to frustration, anger, social isolation and embarrassment. It is therefore important to encourage your family member to communicate and to support them as much as possible.

## **The role of the speech and language therapist (SLT)**

If dysarthria is identified the SLT will assess its nature and severity, and provide treatment and advice if appropriate.

Any goals for therapy will be agreed between yourself and the therapist. The length of therapy input will also be discussed.

The SLT may work with your family to provide advice and strategies to help improve communication in your own environment.

### **Will it get better?**

It depends on the cause and type of dysarthria.

Some communication problems resolve quickly, some take longer to improve and others may not improve at all.

### **More information**

Your speech and language therapist is:

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**If you need to contact us, then please contact the relevant speech and language therapy department on:**

**Fairfield General Hospital- 0161 918 8570**

**North Manchester General Hospital - 0161 720 2232**

**Royal Oldham Hospital - 0161 627 8971**

### **Further information**

[www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)

[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

[www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)

[www.ataxia.org.uk](http://www.ataxia.org.uk)

[www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)

**Notes:**

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**


**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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**Date of publication: March 2012**

**Date of review: April 2021**

**Date of next review: April 2023**

**Ref: PI(DS)734**

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