

Dysarthria

Patient Information

Speech and Language Service

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What is Dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a motor speech disorder. The muscles of the mouth, face, and respiratory system may become weak, move slowly, or not move at all after a stroke or other brain injury. The type and severity of dysarthria depend on which area of the nervous system is affected.

People with dysarthria can experience a number of difficulties such as:

- "Slurred" speech
- Speaking softly or barely able to whisper
- Slow rate of speech
- Rapid rate of speech with a "mumbling" quality
- Abnormal intonation (rhythm) when speaking
- Changes in vocal quality ("nasal" speech)
- Hoarseness
- Breathiness

Why does dysarthria happen?

Dysarthria is caused by damage to parts of the brain responsible for controlling the muscles used to produce speech. Common causes include:

- Stroke
- Head injury
- Cancer
- Neurological conditions

How is dysarthria diagnosed?

A Speech and Language Therapist can assess and confirm the presence of dysarthria or related difficulties.

How is dysarthria treated?

A speech and language therapist usually diagnoses the condition by testing based on the cause, type, and severity of the symptoms. A speech and language therapist works with the individual to improve communication abilities:

- Slowing the rate of their speech.
- Improving the breath support, so the person can speak more loudly.
- Improving articulation, so that speech is clearer.
- Teaching care-givers and family members strategies to better communicate with the person with dysarthria.
- In severe cases, learning to use alternative means of communication.

How can you improve your communication?

- Slowing the rate of your speech
- Take a breath before you speak
- Exaggerate lip and tongue movements when speaking
- Use writing and gesture to support your speech

How can other people help?

- Avoid loud background noise. Remove distractions.
- Wait patiently and encourage the person to slow speech down.
- Ask “yes or no” questions, or questions that only require a one word answer to find out what the person wants.
- When you think you know what is wanted, clarify to make sure you understand correctly.
- Ask them to write key words or use pictures, drawing and gesture to explain themselves.

Need more information?

Your Speech & Language Therapist is:

and can be contacted at:

Telephone:

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient_information/leaflets

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in department/ward.

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