

Dysarthria (difficulty speaking)

Speech and Language Therapy Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have dysarthria and their relatives/carers. It gives information on what this condition is and what can be done to help people who have it.

What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria is difficulty speaking caused by brain damage or brain changes later in life. Speech may sound slurred, nasal, quiet and unclear. It may be very difficult for you or your relative/friend to be understood at all.

What causes it?

The muscles that control speech are usually controlled by the brain and nervous system. If either of these are damaged in some way, the signals from the brain needed to work the speech muscles are disrupted and dysarthria develops.

Dysarthria can occur as a result of:

- Brain damage before or during birth; for example, cerebral palsy.
- Brain changes later in life, such as damage caused by a stroke, head injury or brain tumour, or a condition such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease.

How can I help my relative/friend?

- Encourage slow speech and exaggerated mouth movements. It may help if they emphasise the first sound of each word they say.
- Encourage the splitting up of long words into their separate syllables, for example, 'ther-a-py'.
- If the person's volume is quiet or trails off, encourage short sentences.
- When speech is very difficult or unclear, encourage alternative methods of communication, for example, gesture, pointing, writing or drawing.
- Consider using a personalised communication book using pictures to enable the person to point to what they need.
- Ensure that the environment is quiet – turn off the radio, TV etc.
- Ensure that the person is sitting as upright as possible, dentures and hearing aids in, glasses on etc.
- Ensure that you are positioned face-to-face.

It is likely that a combination of the above strategies will help communication and reduce frustration.

Be aware that speech will probably become less clear towards the end of the day. Tiredness and anxiety make speaking clearly more of an effort and difficult. It is helpful to build in plenty of breaks and to reduce frustration by responding to the content of what is said rather than the manner.

If you would like to discuss your relative's communication further, a speech and language therapist would be happy to do so. Please speak to the nurse in charge of your relative's care or their GP to arrange this.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Speech and Language Therapy Department

Russells Hall Hospital
Pensnett Road, Dudley DY1 2HQ

01384 456111 ext. 2439 or 4565

www.dgft.nhs.uk

Email: speechtherapy.adults@nhs.net

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/speech-and-language-therapy/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔