



**Building healthier lives**

**UHB is a no smoking Trust**

**Dysarthria is a problem which affects muscles used for breathing, voice and speech. It can affect the strength, coordination or speed of muscle movements which can make a person's speech harder for others to understand.**

**This can be the result of a brain injury, stroke, neurological disease, alterations to anatomy or other medical causes.**

Common signs (every person is different)

- Facial muscle weakness
- 'Slurred' speech
- Difficulty coordinating breathing with talking
- 'Nasal' sounding speech
- Faster or slower speech
- Difficulty monitoring volume of speech
- Higher or lower pitch of voice
- Fatigue impacting speech
- Dribbling
- Problems with swallowing

## Strategies for the person with dysarthria

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Slow</b> your speech down</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try and break sentences into <b>shorter phrases</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Over exaggerate</b> mouth movements when talking</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Face</b> the listener and <b>minimise distractions</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a <b>break</b> if becoming tired</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If not understood, take a <b>deep breath</b> and try again</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use <b>gesture</b> and try <b>writing</b> key words down</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Emphasise key words</b></li></ul>	

These are general strategies – a speech and language therapist can provide individual advice.

## Strategies for the listener

- **Minimise distractions** and background noise
- When possible **face the person** when they are speaking
- Encourage them to **take their time**
- **Be honest** if you haven't understood them
- Let them know which part you **did** understand and ask them to try the rest again
- **Encourage** the person to **speak more deliberately**, using a deeper breathing pattern
- Ask the person for the **topic** to provide context
- Encourage the person to **use strategies** from this leaflet
- Ask **clarifying questions**, e.g. "were you telling me about..."
- Encourage use of any **communication aids** provided by a speech and language therapist

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