



**University Hospitals Birmingham**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Dysarthria

**Building healthier lives**

**UHB is a no smoking Trust**



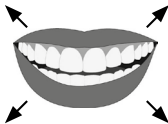




**Dysarthria is a problem which affects muscles used for breathing, voice and speech. It can affect the strength, coordination or speed of muscle movements which can make a person's speech harder for others to understand.**

**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

### How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you. [www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft)**



### Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use text-to-speech reader visit **[www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk)**, click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille or audio please email **[interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk)**



---

## Speech and Language Therapy Services

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2GW  
Telephone: 0121 371 3483

---