Oxford Health NHS
NHS Foundation Trust



Speech and Language Therapy

Dysarthria

What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a lack of clarity of speech caused by the muscles used for speaking not moving properly. This can include poor coordination of breathing, voice and articulation.

Anyone with dysarthria has to put a lot of energy into speaking and will tire easily, making speech less intelligible. Therefore, the severity of the dysarthria may vary throughout the day, often being clearer in the morning and worse in the evening.

There may also be difficulty managing saliva which can lead to drooling.

If dysarthria is very severe, additional and alternative communication methods may be explored.

People with dysarthria do not have difficulty understanding what is said to them, unless they have further language problems.

How you can make your speech clearer

1. Make it as easy as possible for other people to hear you. Get rid of background noise.
2. Look at the person you are speaking to. Make sure they are looking at you as you speak. This will help them understand.
3. Try to avoid leaning forward or tipping to one side. Being upright helps you breathe more easily for speech.
4. Take a deep breath first before you talk.
5. Speak slowly, emphasise the sounds you say within words.

6. Short sentences are usually clearer than long ones. If you have to say a lot, try to break it up into short chunks, taking a breath in between.
7. Don't try to talk and do something else at the same time.
8. If you are not understood, take a breath and say it again more slowly.

How other people can help

- Be patient and tolerant as speech may be slow and take great effort. Give plenty of time.
- Do not request lengthy explanations as this may be tiring.
- Avoid finishing the speaker's sentences (unless they ask you to) - you may guess incorrectly.
- Remember, listening requires more attention than usual.
- Never pretend that you have understood if you have not. Repeat the part of the message you understand and ask questions to establish what else was said.
- If the person is able to write or spell aloud, it may be helpful to use this if a particular word is difficult to understand.
- It's not how they say it, but what they say that's important.
- Give positive confirmation that you have understood.

Your speech and language therapist is:

Name:

Telephone:

Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 328 7971.

If you need the information in another language or format please ask us

Nëse ky informacion ju nevojitet në një gjuhë apo format tjetër, ju lutem na kontaktoni

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان میں یا کسی دوسرے طریقے سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیں۔

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Trust Headquarters
Warneford Hospital
Warneford Lane
Headington
Oxford, OX3 7JX

Switchboard 01865 901 000
Email enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
Website www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

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Produced by registered Speech and Language Therapists.
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