



Dysarthria

What is Dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a difficulty in producing speech due to muscle weakness and/or poor coordination of the speech mechanism.

How does it affect my speech?

- Respiration – Problems with breathing for speech, so talking may be quiet, short, or you might run out of breath easily.
- Phonation – Issues with the vocal cords, making the voice weak, hoarse, or shaky.
- Resonance – Difficulty controlling air through your mouth and nose, which can make speech sound “nasal” or muffled.
- Articulation – Difficulty moving the tongue, lips, or jaw to form clear sounds, causing slurred speech.
- Prosody – Problems with the rhythm, tone, and stress of speech, making it sound flat, uneven, or unnatural.

What can I do?

Here are some tips to help communicate-some suggestions may be more useful than others. Your speech and language therapist will highlight those strategies that are likely to be of particular benefit to you.

Coping Strategies

1. **Slow down your rate of speech:** As the muscles of speech have weakened, they require more time to do the same job effectively. Your listener will be able to understand you more easily if you speak slowly.
2. **Pause frequently:** This will help to stop words running together and stop your voice fading away. It will also make your speech less effortful.
3. **Break down long words:** When trying to say a long word, it helps to break it down into individual syllables which should be pronounced deliberately and separately.
E.g. ca-len-dar te-le-vi-sion af-ter-noon
4. **Careful articulation:** Some of your consonants may not sound as sharp and clear as before. Try to exaggerate the production of the speech sounds that you find difficult. You may be given lists of words and phrases that you can practice reading aloud.
5. **Use shorter sentences:** You may find it easier to improve and maintain clarity if you speak in shorter sentences.

6. **Swallow regularly:** If saliva/spit builds up in your mouth, make sure you swallow or remove it with a tissue so that it doesn't interfere with articulation.
7. **Be short and to the point:** It helps to think ahead about what you want to say.

Adapt to your surroundings?

1. Avoid speaking in noisy surroundings. Turn the noise off or move to a quieter place if possible.
2. Establish eye contact before you start to speak so that you know the other person is listening.
3. Make sure your face and lips can be clearly seen by maintaining good posture (sitting upright with head in midline) and sitting in a good light.
4. Make sure your listener is sitting close to you. Avoid talking to someone across the room, or from another room.

If you would like to discuss the information in this leaflet further, please speak to your speech and language therapist.

List of useful organisations/ contact details:

Your local Speech and Language Therapy Department

Watford General Hospital

Contact number: 01923 217477

Email: westherts.adultslt@nhs.net

Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTIP)

Website: <https://www.asltip.com/>

Contact number: 020 3002 3704

Email: office@helpwithtalking.com

The Stroke Association

Website: <https://www.stroke.org.uk/>

Contact number: 030 3303 3100

Email: helpline@stroke.org.uk

Different Strokes

Website: <https://differentstrokes.co.uk/>

Contact number: 03451 307172 or 01908 317618

Email: info@differentstrokes.co.uk

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217198** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net**

Survey - Friends and Family Test

We welcome feedback about your care, this feedback is shared with all staff so we can improve patients' experience. Click this [link](#) or scan the QR code with your smartphone or type in: bit.ly/4o3QVFJ.



Department	Speech and Language Therapy
Ratified / review date	March 2026 / March 2029
ID number	54/ /V4