

# Dysarthria

## What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria means problems speaking. It is a motor speech disorder that involves the muscles of the face, mouth, and tongue, and coordination of speaking and breathing. It can be caused by nerve or brain damage.

This disorder may cause:

- Slurred speech
- Shortness of breath while speaking
- Poor coordination of phrasing and breath support
- Nasal sounding voice or speaking as if you had a cold
- Breathy or quiet voice
- Harsh or hoarse sounding voice
- Strained or strangled sounding voice
- Voice changes which sound too low or too high
- Monotone or flat sounding speech
- Slow rate of speech

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## **What can be done to improve my speech?**

Your speech language pathologist (SLP) will evaluate your speech patterns, issues and concerns, and develop a treatment program for you. He or she may also give suggestions to help you with your speech, such as:

### **Ways to strengthen the muscles used for speech**

- Exercises for breathing and your voice
- Exercises for lip, tongue, and jaw movements

### **Ways to improve the sound of your speech**

- Speak slowly
- Break speech into short phrases
- Exaggerate movement of the lips and tongue
- Good posture
- Speak on a full breath of air

### **Ways to help you keep focus when talking**

- Avoid noise and other distractions such as the TV or people talking
- State the topic at the beginning of your conversation to help listeners understand

### **Ways to help your listeners better understand your speech**

- Allow extra time for communication, to not be rushed
- Repeat messages to confirm what is being said
- Write down important information to make sure key details are not lost
- Give positive feedback when messages are clearly understood

✦ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**