

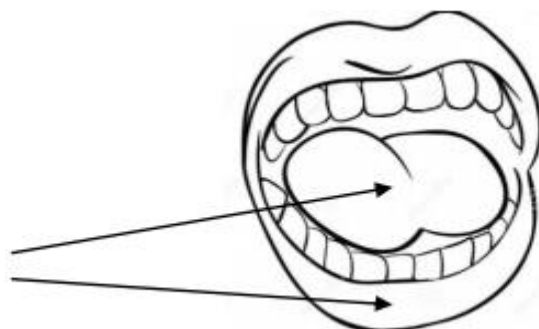
# Dysarthria

## What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria causes difficulty with speech.

It is usually caused by **damage to motor-speech areas of the brain**, e.g. a stroke, brain injury or a progressive neurological condition like Parkinson's Disease.

Dysarthria results **in weakness, or stiffness of the speech muscles**, including the jaw, lips, tongue **and/or** respiratory system (the muscles involved in breathing).



**Dysarthria does not affect a person's understanding.**

However sometimes it can occur alongside language difficulties (aphasia). If this is the case, the person may have difficulty understanding what is said to them.

## What does dysarthria look like?

The effects of dysarthria depend on **where** the damage to the brain is and **how severe** the **damage** is. Some common difficulties seen are:

- ❖ **Slurred** Speech
- ❖ Speaking **quietly** or barely able to whisper
- ❖ Irregular breathing
- ❖ **Slow** or **fast rate** of speech
- ❖ **Difficulty** with **rhythm and intonation** when speaking, e.g. a 'flat' voice
- ❖ **Breathy** or **hoarse** voice
- ❖  **Drooling / dribbling**
- ❖ **Difficulties** with **eating** and **drinking**

### Tips for clearer speech:

- ❖ **Reduce distractions** in the room when having a conversation (e.g. turn off the TV)



- ❖ **Look at the person you are talking to**



- ❖ Take a **deep breath** before talking



- ❖ Be patient. **Give yourself time**



- ❖ **Speak slowly and loudly**



**Use other ways of communicating.** If you are having trouble saying a word:

- ❖ Can you **write** it down?



- ❖ Use **gesture or point** to it?

