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# Dysarthria

[ [en Español](#) ]

Dysarthria is a speech disorder caused by muscle weakness. It can make it hard for you to talk. People may have trouble understanding what you say. Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.

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## About Dysarthria

We use many muscles to talk. These include muscles in our face, lips, tongue, and throat, as well as muscles for breathing. It is harder to talk when these muscles are weak. Dysarthria happens when you have weak muscles due to brain damage. It is a motor speech disorder and can be mild or severe.

Dysarthria can happen with other speech and language problems. You might have trouble getting messages from your brain to your muscles to make them move, called [apraxia](#). You could also have trouble understanding what others say or telling others about your thoughts, called [aphasia](#).

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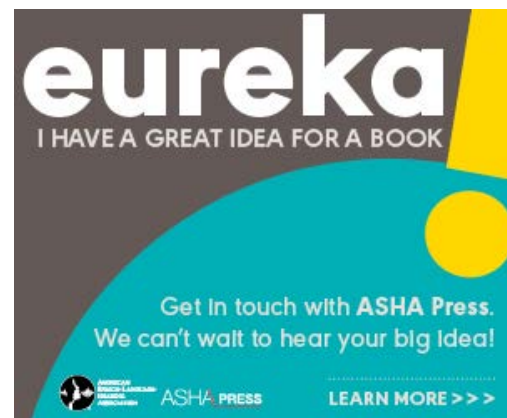
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## Signs of Dysarthria

If you have dysarthria you may:

- Have "slurred" or "mumbled" speech that can be hard to understand.
- Speak slowly.
- Talk too fast.
- Speak softly.
- Not be able to move your tongue, lips, and jaw very well.
- Sound robotic or choppy.
- Have changes in your voice. You may sound hoarse or breathy. Or, you may sound like you have a stuffy nose or are talking out of your nose.

## Causes of Dysarthria

Brain damage causes dysarthria. It can happen at birth or after an illness or injury. Anything that causes brain damage can cause dysarthria, such as:

- Stroke
- Brain injury
- Tumors
- Parkinson's disease
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS
- Huntington's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Cerebral palsy
- Muscular dystrophy

## Testing for Dysarthria

If you have trouble speaking, you should see a doctor right away. It is important to find out why and make sure it does not get worse. An SLP can test your speech and language. This will help the SLP decide if you have dysarthria or another problem. The SLP will look at how well you move your mouth, lips, and tongue and how well you breathe. She will listen to your speech in single words, sentences, and conversation. The SLP will test how well you understand and talk.

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## Treatment for Dysarthria

Your work with the SLP will depend on the type of dysarthria you have and how severe it is. You may work on:

- Slowing down your speech.
- Using more breath to speak louder.
- Making your mouth muscles stronger.
- Moving your lips and tongue more.
- Saying sounds clearly in words and sentences.
- Using other ways to communicate, like gestures, writing, or using computers. This is [augmentative and alternative communication](#), or AAC.

The SLP can also work with your family and friends to help them learn ways to talk with and understand you.

## Tips for Talking With Someone Who Has Dysarthria

Good communication depends on both the person speaking and the person listening. Here are some tips for both of you.

### Tips for You

If you have dysarthria, here are some tips for you:

- Say one word or phrase before starting to talk in sentences. This will tell the listener what the topic is and help them understand what you say. For example, you can say "dinner" before starting to talk about what you want to eat.
- Check with listeners to make sure that they understand you.
- Speak slowly and loudly. Pause to let the other person think about what you have said.
- Try not to talk a lot when you are tired. Your speech may be harder to understand.
- Try pointing, drawing, or writing when you have trouble talking.

Children may need help remembering to use these tips.

### Tips for the Listener

Share these tips with your family and friends:

- Talk to me in a quiet area with good lighting.
- Pay attention to me when I talk.
- Watch me as I talk. This may help you understand what I say.
- Let me know when you have trouble understanding me. Don't pretend to understand me.
- Repeat the part of what I said that you understood. Then I will not have to start all over again.

- If you still don't understand me, ask me yes or no questions. Or, ask me to point or write down what I am saying.

To find a speech-language pathologist, visit [ProFind](#).

## Other Resources

This list does not include every website on this topic. ASHA does not endorse the information on these sites.

- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [FCC speech-to-speech services access numbers](#)

## About Us

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 198,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

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Available 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET  
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[E-MAIL THE ACTION CENTER](#)

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