

Dysarthria



Communication and swallowing difficulties can have a negative impact on a person's confidence when he/she is socialising and participating in daily activities. The Speech Therapy department provides assessment, diagnosis, and therapy services for inpatients and outpatients with speech, language, voice and swallowing disorders.

What is dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a speech disorder that results from muscle weakness, paralysis or a lack of coordination. The disorder is caused by damage to the brain, for example, from a stroke, traumatic brain injury, or disorders such as Parkinson's disease.

How can speech therapy help?

People who develop dysarthria can benefit from speech therapy. A speech therapist will conduct an initial assessment to evaluate the individual's oral-facial muscles and speech production.

Thereafter, a treatment plan will be developed to target the individual's speech difficulties. Therapy sessions vary and may include a variety of exercises.

Therapy goals include:

- Slowing the rate of speech
- Improving breath support to increase loudness
- Strengthening the facial and oral muscles
- Teaching caregivers and family members ways to improve communication with the person
- In severe cases, learning to use alternative forms of communication, for example, alphabet boards, electronic/computerised equipment



Communication strategies

- Allow the person enough time to speak. The severity of dysarthria may worsen if the person feels rushed or excited.
- Do not shout! Dysarthria does not affect hearing.
- Encourage the person to speak in shorter sentences.
- Encourage the person to use alternative ways of communicating, for example, gesturing, writing or drawing.
- It is okay if his/her speech is not perfect, as long as you can understand the message.
- Try to ask questions that require yes/no answers, or give choices, for example, “Do you want tea or coffee?”.
- Use a written alphabet board during communication. This way, the person can point to the first letter or simply spell the word he/she is trying to say.



Symptoms of dysarthria vary. Depending on the extent of the damage to the brain, certain muscles of the face and mouth may become:

- Incoordinated
- Paralysed
- Rigid (slow, reduced movements)
- Too loose
- Too tight
- Weak

When these changes in the muscles occur, they may result in problems with the following systems which are important for speech production:

- Articulation
- Breathing
- Resonance (e.g. nasal quality of speech)
- Stress and intonation of speech
- Voice production

The type and severity of dysarthria depends on the extent and location of the damage to the brain. Most importantly, dysarthria does not affect an individual's intelligence.

For more information

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

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General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6716 5500

www.juronghealth.com.sg

Clinical and appointment line hours (closed on Sundays and public holidays)

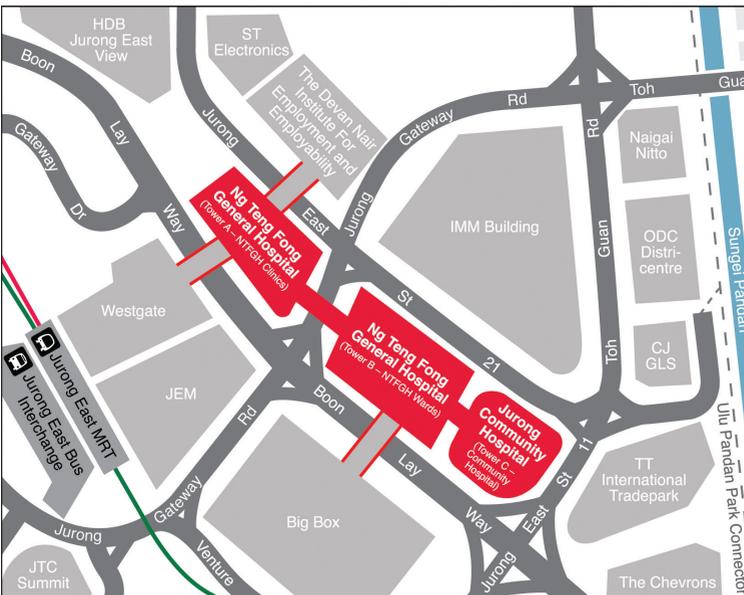
For appointments, please call 6716 2222

Monday - Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm, Saturday 8.00am - 12.30pm

For dental appointments, please call 6716 2233

Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 5.30pm, Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm

Getting there



By train

Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

From Jurong East Bus Interchange

SBS 51, 52, 66, 78, 79, 97, 97e, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 183, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

SBS 99, Private bus service 625

Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.