

## Speech therapy advice and information for people with Parkinson's disease

Sorry,  
I can't  
hear  
you!

Pardon?

**Are people asking you to repeat yourself?  
Are other people saying that they can't hear you?  
Does it seem like everyone has gone deaf?**

Then you might have problems with your speaking. Up to 80% of people with Parkinson's report difficulties with their voice, speech and/or communication.

1. Reduced volume of speech is the most common problem with speaking. Parkinson's affects how your vocal cords move so your voice may sound weaker.
2. The effort you use to speak can be affected so you may be speaking more softly, or you may not be moving the muscles in your face as much.
3. It also affects your ability to hear how loud you are being. You may feel you are speaking loudly enough, but people around you may disagree and be asking you to repeat yourself a lot.

### Other problems that people with Parkinson's can have with their speech include:

- Monotonous (flat) speech;
- Slurred/mumbled speech;
- Difficulty controlling the rate of speaking - too fast or too slow;
- Hoarse voice quality;
- Running out of breath when talking;
- Lack of facial expression due to difficulty moving the muscles in the face.

### Do you think you might need help with your speech?

Ask your family and friends if they have noticed anything different about your speech.

You could record yourself talking on your mobile phone or on your answerphone and listen to it.

Was it loud enough?

Was it clear?

Do you feel that you need some help with your speech/communication?

### How do I get help with my speech / communication?

You can **refer yourself** for Speech and Language Therapy if you think you are having difficulties with your speech or communication.

You can ring us on 024 7696 1010, or write to us at the address on the other side of this information sheet.

Or you can ask your Parkinson's Nurse, GP, Physiotherapist or Consultant to refer you.

**You will be seen for therapy as soon as the service has a suitable appointment.**

## What therapy might I have?

After we receive your referral we will offer you an appointment to assess the difficulties you are experiencing and discuss if therapy may be suitable for you.

Therapy may include one to one sessions with a therapist in clinic or at your home. These sessions may use Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT). [www.lsvtglobal.com](http://www.lsvtglobal.com)

## Things YOU can do NOW to help your speaking

- Speak more loudly if your speech has got quieter.
- Slow down your speech. Take your time.
- If you are asked to repeat yourself use a louder voice.
- Get closer! Talking face to face is usually more successful.
- Get the other person's attention before you start talking.
- Say each word carefully.
- Refer yourself to Speech Therapy for help and advice.



**Use a louder voice when you speak!**

## Advice for your family, friends, relatives and carers

- Turn down/off any background noise. e.g.- the TV/radio.
- Get closer! Talking face to face is usually more successful.
- You may need to remind your friend/relative to speak more loudly.
- Allow plenty of time for conversations and try not to interrupt.
- If unsure, repeat back what he/she has said. Don't pretend to understand.
- Encourage alternative means of communication e.g. a communication chart/alphabet chart/ writing/ gesturing.
- Encourage the person to join in conversations. The person with Parkinson's could be feeling embarrassed by their speech and this could cause the person to talk less.



**Get closer!**

## How can speech therapy help with eating and drinking/swallowing problems?

You may be experiencing problems with eating and drinking, such as:

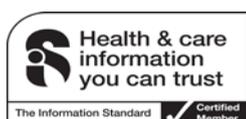
- Problems getting food/drink up to your mouth;
- Difficulties chewing food;
- Coughing or choking when eating or drinking;
- Food and drink going down the wrong way or getting stuck in your throat;
- Drooling/dribbling/ excess saliva.

Speech therapists can assess these difficulties and offer practical advice and suggestions on how to deal with them.

**If you are experiencing problems with swallowing, eating and/ or drinking we recommend you contact your GP as soon as possible so they can refer you to our service.**

**To talk about anything in this leaflet or to refer yourself to our service please contact us:**  
Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy Service, Swanswell Point, Coventry.CV1 4FH.  
**Telephone: 024 7696 1010**

**Please note - An interpreter can be involved with assessment and treatment if needed.**



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