

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month!

Speech and Language Problems

Speech and language problems in adults can result from a variety of causes, including brain injury; stroke; diseases that affect the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, or Parkinson's disease; breathing problems; cancers occurring in the head and/or neck region; and voice damage.

Problems which may affect the following speech and language areas include:

- Aphasia.** This involves problems speaking, understanding, reading, writing, telling time, and/or using numbers. Often misunderstood, aphasia does not affect a person's intelligence. The most common cause of aphasia is stroke.
- Cognitive-communication disorders.** Problems with thinking and communication can affect each other. Some examples are difficulty paying attention, remembering, organizing thoughts, and solving problems.
- Apraxia of speech.** Speech difficulties arise from problem planning motor movements. It is caused by damage to the parts of the brain that are involved in speaking.
- Dysarthria.** Speech difficulties (e.g., slurred speech) due to weakness of muscles involved in breathing and/or speaking.
- Voice disorders.** Changes in pitch, loudness, and vocal quality that negatively impact communication. These may result from nodules on the vocal cord, overuse/misuse of voice (e.g., yelling), disease such as Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis, and other causes.

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Swallowing

Dysphagia, or *swallowing disorders*, is another area Speech-Language Pathologists address. The ability to eat and drink is critical to maintain good health. Food is often a central part of social experiences. Everyone has occasional trouble swallow – difficulty chewing a tough piece of meat, having a sip of liquid “go down the wrong pipe”, having to swallow hard to get a large bite down. People who have dysphagia experience trouble like this *ALL/MOST* of the time.

Causes of Dysphagia:

- **Damage to a person's brain or nerves**, such as stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis.
- **Head or neck problems**, including cancer, head or neck injuries, and mouth or neck surgery.
- **Dental issues** such as bad teeth, missing teeth, or dentures that do not fit well.
- **Medications that cause dry mouth**, which leads to problems with chewing or swallowing.

Signs of dysphagia to look for:

- Coughing during, or right after, eating or drinking
- Having a wet or gurgly-sounding voice during or after eating or drinking
- Food or liquid leaking from the mouth
- Food getting stuck in the mouth
- Having a hard time breathing after meals
- Losing weight

How a Speech-Language Pathologist can help with dysphagia:

- Helping people use their muscles to chew and swallow
- Finding better positions for people to sit or hold their head while eating
- Identify strategies to make swallowing better and safer
- Advising people on their dietary choices, including softer foods or thicker drinks

Better Hearing & Speech Month



Your VOICE and Parkinson's

LSVT LOUD (Lee Silverman Voice Therapy) is a researched based intensive program developed for those with Parkinson's disease who are having difficulty with their voice volume, intelligibility and training people with PD to use their voice at a more normal loudness level while speaking at home, work or in the community.

LSVT LOUD trained to recalibrate your perception of how loud or soft your voice is, and become more comfortable using a stronger voice at a normal loudness level.

LSVT LOUD has also helped people with atypical parkinsonisms, such as progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), and has recently shown promise for adults with speech issues arising from stroke or multiple sclerosis and children with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome. Ask us about our LSVT LOUD program and how it can help you! Not able to come into the clinic? Ask us if eLOUD telehealth is right for you!

Pediatric Services Available!!

Did you know we also offer pediatric services at Virginian Rehabilitation and Wellness? Children with Autism or children who stutter can benefit from Speech-Language Pathology intervention.

A common area of difficulty includes trouble with social communication - children may say the wrong thing or act the wrong way when talking (e.g., laughing at inappropriate times), or they may tell stories that do not make sense or use their language in limited ways.

Stuttering is how well your speech flows, and a child may have trouble starting to speak or may repeat sounds, syllables, words or phrases. They may also have tension or negative feelings about talking.

Speech-Language Pathologists can help children develop their language, social and academic skills they need to reach their full potential.

UPCOMING EVENTS

COME AND JOIN US!!!

- *Now offering TELEHEALTH for Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy.*
- *All classes are on hold till further notice. Please call us for more information.*

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