Tips to Speak Clearly and be Understood

Information for patients

How can I speak more clearly?

• Move your mouth more when you speak. This helps to make each sound clearer.
• Speak loudly and slowly.
• Say every sound of each word. Be sure to say the last sound of words.
• Speak syllable by syllable. Speak word by word.
• Make “key words” stand out. Say these words louder, with more emphasis.
• Take a deep breath from your belly before speaking.

How can I help others understand what I want to say?

• Introduce a topic. Tell people what you want to talk about.
• If possible, make sure that people can see your mouth when you talk.
• Use body language and gestures to help people understand what you are trying to say.
If you cannot say the right word, try these things:

• Describe the word
• Use a different word
• Act it out
• Write it down

What else can help?

• Make sure it is quiet around you. Turn off anything around you that makes loud noises like the radio or TV.
• Take turns speaking by having 1 person speak at a time.

Remember:

You do not have to use these tips all the time. Use them when:

• You want your speech to be clear
• You need people to understand
• Some words or sounds are hard for you to say

Communication is more than speech.

Have feedback about this document?
Please fill out our survey. Use this link: surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact pfe@uhn.ca to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2022 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.

Form: D-5940 | Author: Andrea Gomes | Reviewed: 2022