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.