

Contact details:

Amersham Hospital Speech and Language Therapy Team:

 **01494 734415**

Stoke Mandeville Hospital Speech and Language Therapy Team:

 **01296 315247**

If you cannot get in touch with us, you may find it useful to visit:

<https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/>

or call the Parkinson's helpline on : **0808 800 0303**

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk

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Speech and Language Therapy for people with Parkinson's disease

Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call PALS on 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Common communication difficulties:

- Quiet or soft voice
- 'Mumbled' speech
- Reduced pitch range
- Hoarse or breathy voice
- Difficulty initiating speech
- Difficulty with rate of speech

Common swallowing difficulties:

- Difficulties with saliva
- Difficulty chewing
- Coughing when eating and drinking

How do I see a Speech and Language Therapist?

We accept referrals at any stage of Parkinson's disease. You can refer yourself for an assessment using the contact details on the back of this leaflet. Alternatively, you can ask your GP or Parkinson's Specialist Nurse to refer you.

What to expect at your first appointment

You will be offered an initial assessment appointment, usually at your local hospital. We can provide home visits if you are not able to get to hospital for advice regarding eating, drinking and swallowing.

The Speech and Language Therapist will ask you questions, such as when your communicating/swallowing difficulties started, past medical history and current medications. You will be given information on how Parkinson's can affect communication and swallowing.

How long will my appointment last?

An initial appointment is usually between 45 minutes and an hour. It may be helpful to bring someone who knows you well to the appointment.

What do Speech and Language Therapy offer?

The therapy you receive will depend on your individual needs but may include:

Communication

- **Short course of therapy (3-4 sessions)** – exercises focused on improving volume, breathing and articulation.
- **Community Parkinson's group (once a month)** – opportunity to practice speech exercises learnt in therapy. This also involves talks from guest speakers.
- **Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) (16 sessions over 4 weeks)** – an intensive course of treatment with daily homework tasks.
- **Assessment for alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices** - e.g. amplifiers

Swallowing

If you are having swallowing difficulties, the Speech and Language Therapist will observe you having something to eat and drink. You will be advised about strategies and the safest and easiest consistencies of food and drink for you to swallow.