

### What is stuttering?

Stuttering (or stammering) is a disturbance of the “smooth flow of speech” characterised by repetitions, prolongation or blocking on sounds, syllables, words or phrases.

### Primary types of stuttering

- Repetitions – sound, syllable, word, and phrase
- Block- sound- target or nontarget
- Prolongations
- Combinations of the above

### The following can also be present

- Pauses or hesitations
- Changes in breathing patterns
- Word avoidance
- Insertion of other sounds, words, phrase
- Evidence of “talking around a word”
- Pitch and volume changes

### Secondary symptoms associated with stuttering

- Inappropriate eye-contact
- Facial distortions
- Increased body movement/ tension

## Trading times

Weekdays	9am - 6pm
Saturday	9am - 3pm

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SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Stuttering  
...and  
how to help.

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**9781 4088**

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## When to refer?

Many children produce some minor dysfluency as their speech and language develops, especially between 2-5 years of age. For the majority of children, this is a normal stage of development shown usually by simple repetitions of sounds at the beginning of words. The pattern fluctuates and typically becomes more severe if a child is upset or excited, or angry. Most children "grow out of this" by the age of 5-6 years of age.

## Seek the assistance of a Speech Pathologist if:

- Your child is frustrated or embarrassed by their stuttering
- Your child is elongating sounds
- Your child is blocking (withholding air) when attempting sounds/words.
- There are periods of significant stuttering
- Secondary behaviours develop for example, closing of eyes, twitching of the face during the stuttering.
- If the stuttering continues for 6-8 weeks.

## How can you help a child who is stuttering?

- Listen to what the child is saying, not how they are saying it.
- Try to face the child when he talks to you to show you are listening.
- As stuttering can be made worse by tension and anxiety, try to identify triggers in the child's environment that make their speech more dysfluent.
- Give your child uninterrupted and relaxed opportunities to speak allowing them plenty of time to talk to you.
- Encourage your child to speak at a slow rate when excited or rushed.
- Be a good model, speak to the child clearly and slowly in a fairly relaxed manner.
- Build up your child's confidence by providing quiet talking and reading times
- Give your child lots of positive reinforcement when they are talking smoothly and fluently.



## Don't

- Don't label your child as a stutterer
- Don't interrupt your child's speech, hurry or finish words for them.
- Don't ask your child to repeat a sentence until it is fluent.
- Don't put your child under added pressure when they are dysfluent. For example, recite in front of a stranger or a group of people.
- Try not to allow other children or adults to tease the child about their speech. It is important to bring to the attention of others how you are managing the child's difficulties and request the same approach of them.

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