

Stuttering: Facts and Information

Can stuttering be treated?

There are different successful approaches for the treatment of stuttering in children and adults. The best time to start therapy is between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, preferably before the child starts school.

What is the role of speech therapy?

A speech therapist can help a child who stutters to communicate more easily and effectively. There is no instant cure or 'quick fix' for stuttering. Successful therapy involves a process of change over time. Although is not easy it can make a positive difference.



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What is stuttering?

Stuttering is a complex communication disorder that affects the flow of speech. It begins during childhood and may last through life. Stuttering may have a significant impact on a persons' ability to communicate in key settings, such as the house, school, and at work. This may lead to reduced self-esteem and social interaction.

What are the characteristic of stuttering?

Stuttering characteristics could be classified into two main groups:

1. Speech characteristics (core behaviors) which appear during speaking, including:

- Repetition of sounds, syllables, words, and short phrases, such as:

"The b-b-b-baby is crying" (sound).

"Can, can, can, I come with you?" (word).

- Prolongation of sounds or syllables, such as:

"Caaaaaaaaaan I come too?"

- Blocks, when no sound is produced when trying to initiate speech, such as

"Can.....I come to?"

2. Non-speech characteristics (secondary behaviors) that accompany speech, including physical concomitants such as facial tension, eye blinks, head turns, foot and hand tapping, etc. Avoidance behaviors, such as avoiding using certain words or phrases, avoiding answering a mobile phone and avoiding answering questions in the classroom, etc.

What causes stuttering?

The exact causes of stuttering are still unknown but recent studies suggest there are main factors that contribute to the development of stuttering, such as:

- **Genetics:** Approximately 60% of people who stutter have at least one family member with stuttering.
- **Language Development:** Children with other speech and language impairments are more likely to stutter.
- **Family Dynamics:** High parent expectations and a busy lifestyle may lead to stuttering.



When can stuttering be diagnosed?

Stuttering can be diagnosed as early as the age of two years old. There are some factors that may indicate a child is at risk for stuttering. Knowing these factors will help you decide whether your child needs to be seen by a speech pathologist.

Risk factor chart

Place a check next to each that is true for the child

☐ Risk Factor ☐ Elevated Risk ☐ true for child

☐ Family history of stuttering

A parent, sibling. Or other family member who still shutters

☐ Age at onset: after age 3

☐ Time since onset: shuttering 6-12 months or longer

☐ Gender: male

☐ Other speech production concerns:
speech sound errors or trouble being understood

Language skills

☐ advanced ☐ delayed ☐ disordered

If your child has risk factors of stuttering (as illustrated on the chart), ask your physician for a referral to a speech-language pathologist.