

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Contact: (Name)**

**(Phone, Email)**

**Communication and Swallowing Disorders Common in Adults**

*(City) Residents Encouraged to Learn the Signs, Seek Help This*
*National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*

**City, State, May 1, 2024—**With speech, language, and swallowing disorders common in adults following stroke, head and neck cancer, and a variety of other illnesses and injuries, (City)-based speech-language pathologist (Name) encourages residents to learn the signs—and seek an evaluation—if they have concerns about themselves or a loved one. This is a timely message, as May is recognized as *National Speech-Language-Hearing Month.*

“If you have experienced a change in health from an injury or illness, your ability to communicate effectively may be different,” said (Last name). “Effective communication is critical to your recovery and to your quality of life.”

(Name) continued: “Communication is something we often take for granted until we are faced with challenges. But it is central to everything that we do. Luckily, speech-language pathologists can help people who have had strokes, traumatic brain injuries, and other life-alerting events make progress so they can share medical information, stay connected to friends and family, and return to the activities that make up their daily lives.”

The causes of speech and language problems that begin for the first time in adulthood can vary. Common causes—in addition to strokes, cancers in the head and/or neck region, and brain injuries— include Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson’s disease. Communication difficulties can also stem from breathing problems and voice damage.

Speech and language disorders that may be acquired in adulthood include the following:

* **Aphasia.** This involves problems speaking or signing, understanding, reading, and writing. Often misunderstood, aphasia does *not* affect a person’s intelligence. The most common cause of aphasia is stroke.
* **Cognitive-communication disorders.** This involves problems with thinking that can affect communication. Some examples are difficulty paying attention, remembering, organizing thoughts, and solving problems.
* **Apraxia of speech.** This involves the way the brain plans and coordinates movements for speech.
* **Dysarthria.** This involves changes in the muscles and nerves used for speech and/or breathing.
* **Voice disorders.** This involves changes in pitch, loudness, and vocal quality that negatively impact communication.

Speech-language pathologists also help people with swallowing disorders—such disorders are called *dysphagia*. Dysphagia is caused by numerous diseases and injuries in adults. A person’s ability to eat and drink is related to maintaining good health, recovering from illness, ensuring quality of life, and is a central part of many social experiences and family traditions.

Speech-language pathologists treat dysphagia in various ways:

* Exercises to help strengthen muscles for chewing and swallowing
* Techniques to help food and liquid move differently while chewing and swallowing
* Guidance to help reduce the risk of illness related to swallowing

Learn more about speech, language, and swallowing problems in adults from the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/). (City) residents who would like to discuss their speech, language, and swallowing concerns may contact (Name) at (phone, email, or website).

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