

Health & Wellbeing



Only About
Children

Stuttering

WHAT IS STUTTERING?

Stuttering is a speech disorder that causes interruptions to the fluency of speech. These interruptions may include sounds that are repeated (n-n-no-no), syllable that are repeated (ba-ba-ba-baby), whole words that are repeated (and-and-and) or phrases that are repeated (I want the- I want the- I want the). The repetitions can occur once or many times. Stuttering may also include prolongations, where a sound or part of a word is stretched out (miiiiiiiine), and blocks, where the person is trying to speak with no sound coming out. There may also be other behaviours that accompany the stutter, such as grunting, filler words, pauses, and non-verbal behaviours such as grimacing, blinking or body movements.

WHAT CAUSES STUTTERING?

The exact cause of stuttering is unknown. It is not usually caused by a particular event, person, or experience, nor is it triggered by stress or anxiety. Some people inherit traits that put them at risk to develop a stutter.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY STUTTERING?

Approximately 1% of the population experiences stuttering at any given time. Stuttering usually starts in early childhood, often by the age of three. It may develop gradually or quite suddenly. Stuttering may change in type or frequency over time and it may decrease or disappear for periods of time.

Recent Australian research shows that 8.5% of three-year-old children experience stuttering however not all of these children will continue to stutter. As many as 75% will grow out of stuttering without the need for intervention. It is not possible to determine who will experience this natural recovery, but adolescents and adults are very unlikely to experience natural recovery.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Visit The Lidcombe Program Trainers Consortium (www.lidcombeprogram.org) or speak to a Speech Pathologist for further information.

References:

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Speech Pathology Australia

http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/library/2013Factsheets/Factsheet_Stuttering.pdf