

Dysarthria

What is Dysarthria?

Dysarthria is a speech impairment that can result in unclear speech that is difficult to understand. This results from muscle weakness, paralysis, or a lack of coordination. This is commonly caused by stroke, traumatic brain injury, brain tumour, infections, or degenerative diseases (e.g. Parkinson's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis).

Signs of Dysarthria

The individual may present with the following:

- Slurred speech
- Slow speech
- Soft volume
- Abnormal tone and rhythm when talking
- Changes in voice (e.g. nasality, hoarseness)
- Restricted movements in the jaw, lips and tongue

What can caregivers do to help?

- Minimise background noise before speaking
- Remind the individual to:
 - Speak slowly
 - Concentrate on pronouncing and exaggerating each sound and syllable (e.g. te-le-vi-sion)
 - Take a deep breath before speaking
 - Use shorter sentences
- Encourage the individual to take breaks from talking because speech may get worse when they are tired
- Encourage the individual to use alternative forms of communication (e.g. gestures, drawing, writing, alphabet board)

How can speech therapy help?

Speech therapy can help to:

1. Improve speech clarity through speech practice and the use of targeted strategies
2. Provide training to carer(s) with strategies for facilitating communication
3. Develop alternative forms of communication as necessary
4. Help the individual regain confidence in communication

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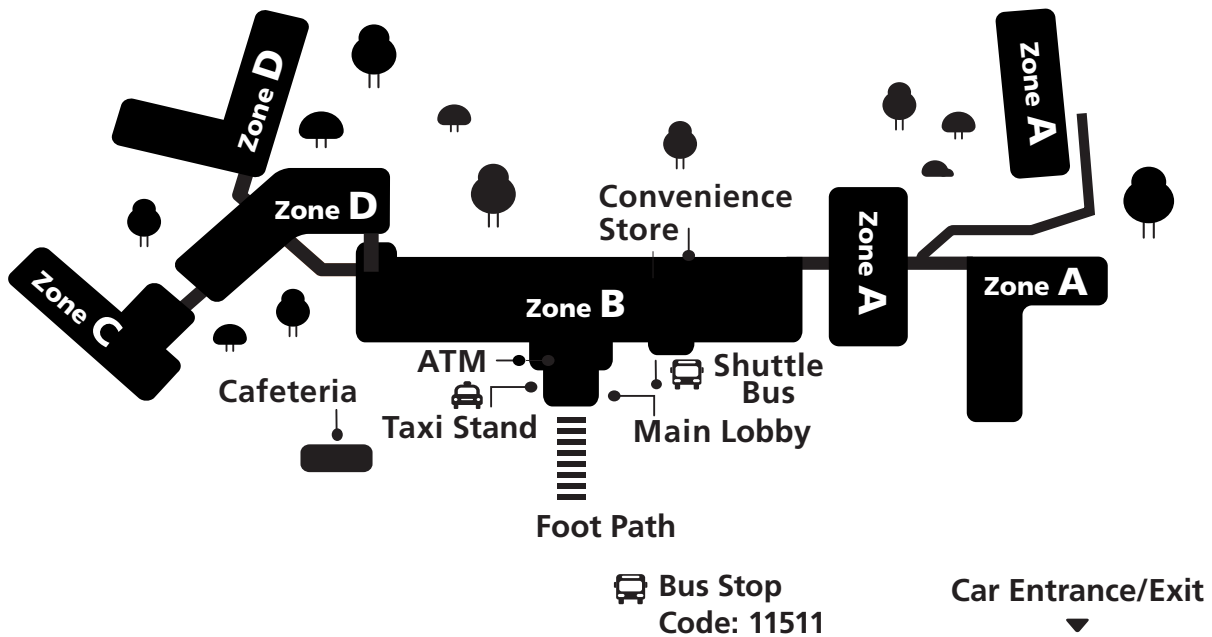
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