



Stuttering



What is normal?

Many children between the ages of two and six repeat sounds, words and part of words when they are speaking. This is natural and is called normal dysfluency. Here are some examples:

It is normal for children to:

- repeat one word or a few words: "My-my ball went under the table."
- change a sentence "It went – my ball went under the table."
- fill a pause with "um" "ah" "uh" : "I want some – um– my ball!"
- pause or hesitate but not fill it in "Daddy, – – – – throw my ball!"
- repeat a single word part: "Mom-mommy catch"

When to be concerned

A small number of children will have a problem with stuttering. These children:

- often repeat sounds and parts of words: "Ca-ca – can I have i-i-i-ice cream?"
- leave out or break up groups of words "Uh– – it's too hard for me." "My brother has a – – bike too."
- hold a sound for longer than three seconds: "I wa– –ant to play with h– – im."
- look away or are afraid to talk in some situations.
- show how much trouble it is to speak by blinking their eyes, stamping their feet, moving their head or taking deep breaths.

What to do?

Here are some ways to help a child with either normal dysfluency or stuttering:

- speak in a slow, easy, relaxed manner.
- look at the child while the child is talking.
- give the child time to finish talking.
- take turns talking.
- don't talk about the child's speech in front of them.

If you have any concerns about the child's speech, contact your local Health Centre and speak to the Speech Language Pathologist. It is important to get help for any child who stutters as soon as possible. Children often stutter when they are tired, excited or in new situations. Be patient if it happens to your child. Just listen and don't try to correct or help. Normal dysfluency usually disappears as a child gets older.

For more information, contact a Speech/Language Pathologist at the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority:

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES/OFFICES IN VANCOUVER AND RICHMOND

Vancouver

Evergreen Community Health Centre
3425 Crowley Drive..... 604-872-2511
North Community Health Office
1651 Commercial Drive..... 604-253-3575
Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre
2110 West 43rd Avenue..... 604-261-6366
Raven Song Community Health Centre
2450 Ontario Street 604-709-6400
South Community Health Office
6405 Knight Street 604-321-6151
Three Bridges Community Health Centre
1292 Hornby Street..... 604-736-9844

**Speech – Language Department
Richmond Health Department
8100 Granville Avenue
604-233-3228**