

What is Stuttering?

Stuttering is a condition that affects the speech. It is a disorder that involves a person having disruptions in the production of speech



sounds. These disruptions are also called "disfluencies." For example, a person might repeat words or precede a word with "um" or "uh."

Usually, stuttering begins in childhood. Some people grow out of stuttering while others stutter for life. The second week of May is National Stuttering Awareness Week. Over three million Americans stutter.

There are various signs of stuttering, which could include repetitions of words or parts of words, or prolongations of certain sounds. Sometimes speech is completely stopped, which is referred to as *blocked*. In this case, the mouth is positioned to say a sound, but nothing comes out.

There are several examples of stuttering. Someone might say "W-W-W-Why are you doing that?" This is an example of part-word repetition. "Ssssstop doing that" is an example of sound prolongation. The person is having a difficult time moving from the s to the rest of the word. "I'm trying to...um um, like, uh...move my car." This person is using a series of interjections until he is able to transition to the next part of the sentence.

Stuttering can have an impact on a person's life. A person who stutters may avoid public speaking or speaking in general. He or she may find it difficult to communicate with others.

Stuttering is usually easily heard by any listener, but a certified speech-language pathologist (SLP) can evaluate and diagnose the exact types of speech disfluencies a person produces. An SLP will look for certain risk factors to determine if a child's stuttering will continue. These include a family history of stuttering, presence of other speech or language disorders, stuttering that has continued for more than six months, and strong fears about stuttering.

Treatment for stuttering is considered "behavioral." People who stutter can often learn new patterns of speech, which usually includes speaking slowly with short phrases and sentences. Over time, people can often learn to speak "smoother" by practicing breathing techniques and eventually practicing with increasingly challenging sentences.

If someone you know stutters, some people are not sure how to communicate with that person. Some people will interrupt, fill in the words, or simply ignore the person who stutters. The best thing to do is just listen, and don't rush the person. If you yourself stutter, it's important to talk to others about how you can overcome some of the effects of stuttering.

Many famous people have risen above the challenges of having a stutter, including Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, and Carly Simon.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Stuttering is an example of a _____ disorder.
 - a. Sight
 - b. Hearing
 - c. Speech
 - d. Movement

2. "W-W-W-When will you pick me up?" is an example of:
 - a. Part word repetition
 - b. Word repetition
 - c. Sound Prolongation
 - d. Interjection Use

3. "Llllllllllove you!" is an example of:
 - a. Part word repetition
 - b. Sound prolongation
 - c. Interjection Use
 - d. Word Repetition

4. When is National Stuttering Awareness Week?
 - a. The first week of May
 - b. The second week of May
 - c. The third week of May
 - d. The fourth week of May

5. Which of the following people had a stutter?
 - a. Bill Clinton
 - b. George Bush
 - c. Winston Churchill
 - d. Beethoven

6. How many Americans stutter?
 - a. Over two million
 - b. Over three million
 - c. Over seven million
 - d. Over ten million

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. What is another word for the disruptions that might occur in a person's speech?
2. What does SLP stand for?
3. List two risk factors that might help determine if a child is at risk to have a long-term stuttering problem.
4. Imagine you have a stuttering problem. How do you think it would feel to communicate with others in everyday situations?
5. What important lesson can we learn from the famous and successful people who didn't let their stuttering stop them?
6. What is the best thing to do if someone you are talking to is stuttering?
7. Provide a written dialogue where one person uses **interjections** as a way of avoiding stuttering.

ANSWER KEY:

Multiple Choice:

1. C
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B

Short Answer:

1. Disfluencies.
2. SLP stands for Speech Language Pathologist.
3. Any two of the following would be correct: A a family history of stuttering, presence of other speech or language disorders, stuttering that has continued for more than six months, and strong fears about stuttering.
4. Individual Response.
5. Individual Response. Example: We can learn that even when we have challenges, we can still be successful.
6. Just listen, and don't rush the person.
7. Individual Response. Example:
"Hello Bob, how are you"
"I'm fine, um, uh,....uh how are you?"
"Great! Beautiful day out, isn't it?"
"It is a...um..uh – ahem – it's a beautiful day."