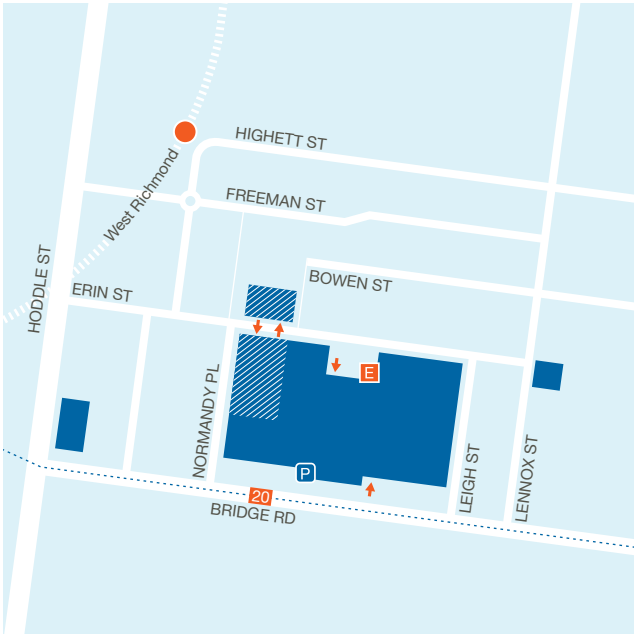


## For more information

Speak to an Epworth Rehabilitation Speech Pathologist at one of the locations below.

### Epworth Rehabilitation Richmond



### Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton



### Epworth Rehabilitation Camberwell



## Epworth Rehabilitation

Excellence. Everywhere. Everyday.

### Rehabilitation Services

Epworth Rehabilitation Richmond  
89 Bridge Road  
Richmond Vic 3121  
Phone 03 9426 8726  
Fax 03 9426 8734

Epworth Rehabilitation Camberwell  
888 Toorak Road  
Camberwell Vic 3124  
Phone 03 9805 4125  
Fax 03 9591 9249

Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton  
85 Wilson Street  
Brighton Vic 3186  
Phone 03 9592 9144  
Fax 03 9593 1276

### Acute Services

Epworth Richmond  
89 Bridge Road  
Richmond Vic 3121  
Phone 03 9426 8726  
Fax 03 9426 8734

Epworth Freemasons  
166 Clarendon Street  
East Melbourne Vic 3002  
Phone 0488 200 447

[www.epworth.org.au](http://www.epworth.org.au)

Revised August 2010



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# Dysphasia



**This information is for people who are interested in dysphasia or who need to communicate with a person who has dysphasia.**

**If you have difficulty reading or understanding this information, please ask your Speech Pathologist for assistance.**

## What is dysphasia?

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Dysphasia (or aphasia) is the impairment of language skills due to damage to the brain. Dysphasia results in changes to some or all of the following areas of communication: understanding, talking, reading and writing.

The main centres that control speech and language are on the left side of the brain and dysphasia most often results from damage to these areas.

Dysphasia will differ from person to person depending on which parts and how much of the brain is affected.

Conditions that can cause dysphasia include:

- Stroke; blockage of blood supply or bleeding in the brain
- Trauma to the brain; usually as a result of an accident, infection, or toxic substance
- Degenerative diseases; e.g. dementia
- Brain tumours.

## Effects of dysphasia

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A person with dysphasia may experience difficulty:

- Concentrating and remembering information
- Understanding what people are saying in conversation
- Understanding and using gestures, such as pointing, waving or facial expressions
- Understanding written information such as newspapers, books and signs
- Finding the word they want to use when talking or writing. People may get stuck on a word
- Mixing up the sounds in words or meanings of words
- Using correct words (some may be nonsense words)
- Recognising specific sounds or words
- Controlling automatic language (e.g. swearing).

## Recovery from dysphasia

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Dysphasia may resolve quickly or there may be ongoing difficulties which require management by a Speech Pathologist.

A Speech Pathologist will be able to advise ways to communicate effectively and discuss if therapy is suitable.

In addition, the Speech Pathologist can advise family / carers on ways to maximise their communication with the person with dysphasia.

## Treatment of dysphasia

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Treatment of dysphasia is dependent on the specific difficulties the person is experiencing. Treatment usually has a practical focus, helping the person communicate effectively in everyday life.

For example, if Bob has difficulty finding the right words to say, therapy will aim to increase Bob's ability to use the right words or appropriate strategies when he has difficulty.

Various communication aids such as white boards, picture boards and electronic talkers may help a person with dysphasia convey their message. These aids may be used in the short and long term and are usually implemented with the help of a Speech Pathologist.

## Communicating with someone who has dysphasia

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### General Tips

- Reduce background noise and distractions
- Ensure the person is wearing their glasses and hearing aid if appropriate
- Include the person with dysphasia in conversations
- Encourage and accept all attempts at communication
- Always check to see if both communication partners are talking about the same topic.

### When you are listening

- Make sure you are looking at the person
- Allow the person plenty of time to speak
- Encourage the person to use gesture, such as hand movements or facial expressions.

### When you are talking

- Make sure the person can see your face easily
- Use simple language - avoid complicated words
- Allow the person plenty of time to understand what has been said
- Ask questions that require a yes / no or one word response. e.g. *'Would you like a vanilla or chocolate ice cream?'* or *'Would you like a chocolate ice cream?'*
- Draw, write or gesture to add more meaning to your spoken words
- Slowly repeat instructions or key words if you are concerned the other person has not understood.