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Communication—the ability to understand and express ideas—is a skill we often take for granted. However, disorders of communication, speech-language-hearing, are more common than you might expect.

One out of every 10 Americans experiences some difficulty in communication. Speechlanguage-hearing disorders are more prevalent than cancer, blindness or heart disease. In fact, communication disorders occur more frequently than all three combined.

The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders at Erlanger Medical Center is committed to providing professional diagnosis and treatment of these disorders. Erlanger is the only medical facility in South East Tennessee with a full-time speech and hearing staff to provide both inpatient and outpatient services for adults as well as children.

Erlanger's Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders affers not only the professional skills of full-time speech pathologists who have received their Certificates of Clinical Competence in Speech Pathology, but also the resources of the regional leader in healthcare, including the services of licensed audiologists.

MEETING THE PATIENT'S NEEDS

Speech-language-hearing disorders vary in type and cause. Each one requires specialized treatments. The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders' professional staff recognizes these different types of disorders and their causes and treats each patient individually.

If the patient requires hospitalization, daily therapy is available. After the patient is discharged and returns home, continuity of therapy is achieved through Erlanger's outpatient therapy program.

However, if the patient cannot travel to the hospital, therapy is available through Contin-U-Care Home Health, which utilizes the services of the Center's speech pathologists. This allows the patient to receive care and treatment from the same therapists who began the patient's therapy while hospitalized. In treating speech-language-hearing disorders, continuity of therapy is of utmost importance to assure a quick and safe recovery.

Regardless of the disorder. The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders' professional staff's main goal is helping each patient overcome his or her disorder so he or she may live a fulfilling and happy life.



UNDERSTANDING SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING DISORDERS

Speech-language-hearing disorders can be caused by any number of reasons and can happen to anyone at any age. The different disorders, their various causes and the available means of treatment are explained below to help you understand them.

Aphasia is the disorder of language associated with brain injury, disease or stroke. The inability to process the spoken or written word, as well as the inability to express ideas, are all characteristic of aphasia, in both the stroke patient and the patient with closed or open head injuries.

When a person suffers a stroke, therapy is available on a daily basis during hospitalization. After the patient is discharged and returns home, continuity in therapy can be achieved through either the outpatient therapy program, or if the patient cannot travel to the hospital, therapy is available through Contin-U-Care Home Health.

Accidents cannot be predicted. No one expected the 30-year-old to fall from scaffolding while at work or the 16-year-old to be involved in a car accident.

However, these accidents happened and the language skills of both patients were severely impaired. Speech-language therapy during hospitalization as well as following discharge made communication possible again.



Pediatric Speech-Language Disorders are frightening to parents. Parents love their children and want only the best for them. Without adequate communication skills, children cannot reach their full potential—their best.

When children are delayed in language development (expression/understanding) or articulatory skills (speech sounds), their development in other areas, such as social and academic skills, is also depressed.

These disorders can result from congenital birth defects such as cleft palate, brain injury prior to or following birth, reduced environmental stimulation, hearing loss or poor listening skills.

If you suspect your child of having difficulty developing communication, speech pathology services are available at T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital. Inpatient and outpatient services are provided.

Voice Disorders are abnormal variations in pitch, quality, loudness, or inflectional changes. Voice disorders can occur due to environmental factors such as persistent use of a loud voice resulting in callouses on the vocal chords, or disease requiring surgical management as with cancer of the throat.



Both the patient with vocal callouses (nodules) and the patient requiring surgery for throat cancer (laryngectomy) can benefit from voice therapy. Prevention, through appropriate use of the vocal mechanism, is emphasized in cases of vocal abuse. Compensatory measures are emphasized to teach efficient use of residual structures following surgeries.

Dysfluency (stuttering) is the involuntary stopping or repeating of sounds, parts of words or whole words. This interferes with communication as well as increases the person's anxiety about speaking. Outpatient therapy is available to systematically decrease anxiety and improve fluency.

Hearing Loss can be a result of various causes: heredity, disease, birth defect, accident or noise. The deficit may be mechanical (damage to the ear canal or bones of the ear), electrical (distortion of sound waves within the inner ear), or central (inability of the brain to decode the message).

Early identification, provided by a licensed audiologist, can result in proper management and improvement in communication. This service is available to inpatients at Baroness Erlanger Hospital and T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital.



Swallowing Disorders are frequently present following a stroke or head injury. The Erlanger Plaza Swallowing Center provides diagnosis for these disorders with both the radiologist and speech pathologist present.

Motion picture X-rays on videotape provide a detailed examination of the structure and function involved in swallowing to help locate the

problem.

The staff gives particular attention to potential aspiration (food entering the airway). Should this accur, compensatory therapy is attempted during the X-ray to determine the benefit. Erlanger's Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders provides subsequent therapy.

When infants and young children experience difficulty eating, therapy is available through T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital. Frequently, the X-ray is not necessary. Often, a child is not aware of how to eat following prolonged periods of tube feedings due to serious illnesses. Oral stimulation often benefits these children.

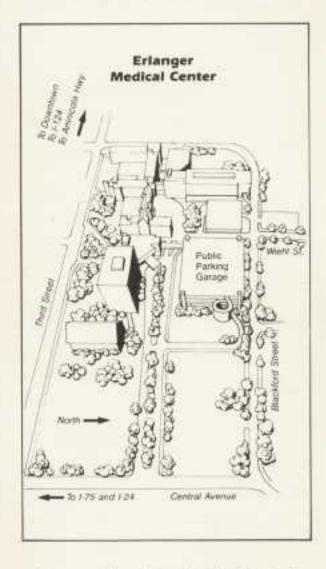
The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders wants to help you or any member of your family who has a communication disorder. Regardless of the type of disorder, the speech pathologists can help you overcome it through therapy.

Call Erlanger's Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders today at (615) 778-7916 and let the region's leader in quality care help you.

LOCATION

The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders is located on the Third Floor of Erlanger Medical Center at 975 East Third Street in Chattanooga, Tennessee. When entering the Medical Center from the first floor of the parking garage, follow these directions:

- 1) Turn right at the Gift Shop.
- 2) Turn right at the mirrors.
- 3) Take the "F" elevator to the Third Floor.
- 4) Turn right off the elevator into the Center.



For more information about The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders and the services offered, call (615) 778-7916.

The Center for Speech and Hearing Disorders at Erlanger Medical Center 975 East Third Street Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403 (615) 778-7916