



Techniques for Improving Verbal Communication

1. Speaking requires full attention. Don't eat or drink and talk at the same time, for fear of aspiration (food going down the wrong way).
2. Be sure to have the attention of the listener. Many listeners quickly learn to read lips well.
3. Keep the mouth free of excess saliva. An electric suction machine is helpful. Drugs that dry the mouth can also help.
4. Speak slowly, with fewer words on one breath, but speak in sentences.
5. Avoid tightness of neck muscles by doing relaxation exercises. Spare the voice, but be as precise as possible.
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7. Avoid muscle-relaxant drugs such as diazepam (Valium) if breath is short, because they may depress breathing.
8. Use an artificial voice device to create sound if needed. It will not help with the shaping of words.
9. Consider a partial lift prosthesis when the voice is too nasal or fluid enters the nose.
10. Substitute sounds for those that are difficult. A speech therapist can help.
11. If excessive salivation interferes with speech, medical, or surgical control may be possible. See MALS Manual IV.



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