

Aphasia



What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is an acquired communication disorder where there is a difficulty in understanding and using language.

Aphasia can occur after damage to parts of the brain that is important for understanding and producing language. It can affect speaking, listening, reading and writing.



Aphasia can occur for a variety of reasons including:

- Stroke
- Brain injury
- Brain tumours
- Hypoxic brain injury
- Traumatic brain injury
- Infections or inflammations of the brain
- Progressive neurological disorders such as dementia

People with aphasia may have difficulties with:



Comprehension

- Listening and understanding what people say
- Following conversations
- Understanding, planning and / or organising written information



Expression

- Finding and speaking the right words
- Getting stuck on certain words or phrases
- Using strange words which may sound foreign or nonsensical
- Spelling



Other aspects such as understanding numbers / completing calculations

- Dialing phone numbers
- Purchasing items or money management

Impact of Aphasia

Aphasia can affect people in different ways. Some patients cannot speak at all, while some can say a few words. Others may have trouble with reading or writing. Often, patients with aphasia can think clearly, but have difficulty communicating their thoughts.

Aphasia can affect patients' daily activities such as having conversations, talking on the phone and reading shop signs. Consequently, aphasia may lead to isolation, relationship problems, anxiety and depression.



How can Speech Therapy help?

Speech therapists work with patients and their families to identify goals for treatment, conduct a communication assessment and provide treatment and strategies to assist patients.

Speech therapists develop individual therapy programmes targeted at improving specific skills for understanding and using language.

Therapy may also involve teaching of strategies for specific communication activities and training the family to utilise other forms of communication. These can include writing, drawing, the use of picture-based symbols of an alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) device. Therapy can also help patient regain confidence in their communication and facilitate participation in everyday life.



Strategies for families and caregivers:

- ✓ Ensure you have patient's attention before talking
- ✓ Reduce background noise and distractions
- ✓ Speak in short simple sentences
- ✓ Slow down and emphasise key words
- ✓ Be clear, introduce one idea at a time
- ✓ Encourage and use other ways of using communication such as gestures, writing and drawing
- ✓ Check if you have understood patient's message correctly, such as by asking "yes" and "no" questions (e.g. "Do you mean you would like some apple juice?")
- ✓ Avoid talking down to the patient, continue to talk to them as an adult
- ✓ Acknowledge the patient's competence; with support, they can still communicate and make decisions, participate in their healthcare and everyday life

NOTES

The page features a large white area with a blue border and a dotted grid pattern, intended for writing notes. The grid consists of small blue dots arranged in a regular pattern, forming a guide for handwriting. The background is a solid blue color with faint, light blue geometric shapes (squares and crosses) scattered across it.

**For more information on Aphasia,
please scan the following QR codes:**



<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/aphasia/>



www.aphasia.sg

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