

Education for Patient and Family

What is **aphasia**?

- Aphasia is a **language problem**

- Difficulty with **speaking**



- Difficulty with **understanding**



- Difficulty with **reading**



- Difficulty with **writing**



- Aphasia affects **conversational interaction**

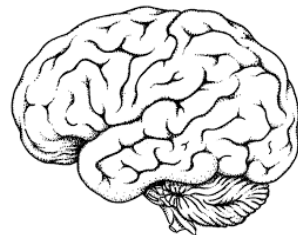
- Aphasia does not affect **intelligence**

Aphasia does not change you:

- You can still **have opinions**
- You can still **socialize**
- You can still **make your own decisions**

What **causes** aphasia?

- **Brain injuries** can cause aphasia
 - **Stroke**
 - **Head injuries:** Car accidents, falls, trauma
- Other neurological diseases can cause aphasia
 - **Dementia**
 - **Brain tumors**



How **common** is aphasia?

- About **1 million people** in the U.S. have aphasia
- 1 in 250 people has aphasia

What **other problems** could you have?

1. Dysarthria:

- **Weakness** in the speech muscles
- Reduced **speech quality**
- Reduced **intelligibility**

2. Dysphagia:

- **Swallowing** difficulty
- Chewing difficulty

3. Changes in **cognitive ability**:

- Difficult to **concentrate** or pay attention
- Cannot **remember** new information
- Difficulty with **problem solving**

4. Apraxia:

- Difficulty with carrying out **voluntary speech or body movements**

5. Perseveration:

- **Inappropriate repetitions** of sounds, words, phrases or tasks

Where to find **more information** about aphasia?

- Triangle Aphasia Project (TAP)
 - Local support groups
 -  (919) 484-7719
 - www.aphasiaproject.org
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
 - www.asha.org
- National Aphasia Association (NAA)
 - www.aphasia.org

Communication Tips for Family and Caregivers

- Be a **partner** — not a therapist
- Set the stage for effective communication:
 - Good lighting
 - Relaxed atmosphere
- Speak at a normal rate, pauses appropriately
- Don't use "baby talk"
- Write down key words to aid comprehension
- Provide choices
- Be willing to accept ANY form of communication:
 - Speech
 - Gestures
 - Writing
 - Drawing
 - Using a communication notebook
- Sit down and have a pleasant conversation with your partner for at least once a day

Adapted from:

- http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/RegainingIndependence/CommunicationChallenges/Being-A-Communication-Partner_UCM_310093_Article.jsp
- <http://www.aphasia.ca/home-page/about-aphasia/what-is-aphasia/>