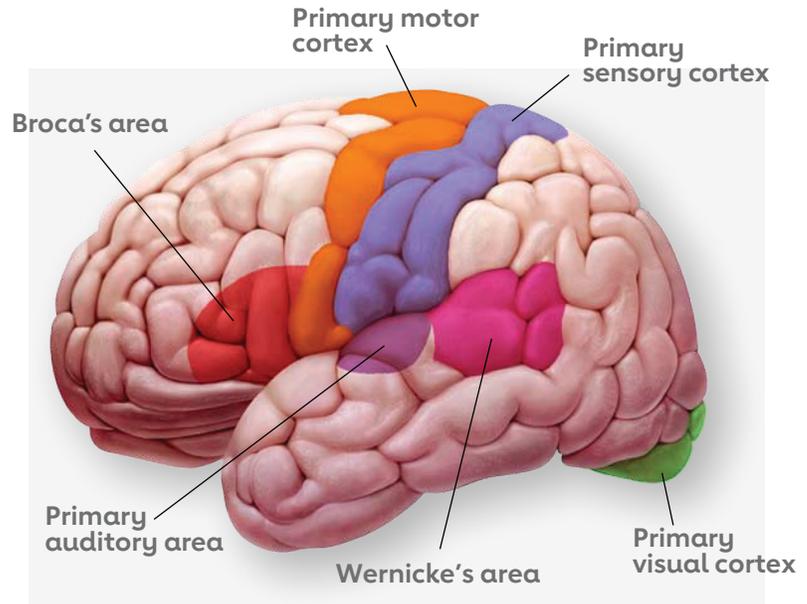




let's talk about

Stroke and Aphasia

Aphasia is a language disorder that impairs the ability to communicate. It's most often caused by stroke-related injuries to certain areas of the brain (usually on the left side) that influence how we use and understand language.



What are the effects of aphasia?

Aphasia can cause a person's speech to be jumbled, fragmented or hard to understand. They may have:

- Difficulty getting words out
- Trouble finding words
- Difficulty understanding what others are saying
- Problems with reading, writing or math
- Trouble with long and/or uncommon words

Aphasia doesn't affect intelligence. People with aphasia usually remain mentally alert.

What is it like to have aphasia?

Aphasia often plunges alert, intelligent people into a world of jumbled communication. Imagine not being able to recognize the words in the headline of a story. It could be like trying to say, "Put the car in the garage." But it comes out, "Put the train in the house." Or, "widdle tee car ung sender plissen."

People with aphasia are often frustrated and confused because they can't speak as well and/or understand others the way they could before their stroke. They may act differently because of changes in their brain and show symptoms of depression. A person with aphasia will likely

undergo evaluation by a multifaceted team to determine the best treatment plan.

Are there different types of aphasia?

Yes. They include:

- **Global aphasia:** People have a severe impairment in forming and understanding words and sentences. Many are unable to read or write.
- **Broca's aphasia:** Speech is halting and difficult, marked by problems with grammar such as dropped words and sometimes impaired comprehension.
- **Wernicke's aphasia:** People often string together meaningless words that only sound like a sentence and have difficulty understanding others' speech.

What is the difference between aphasia and apraxia?

Aphasia, apraxia of speech and oral apraxia are all communication disorders that can result from a stroke. It can be hard to distinguish them, especially since all three may be present at the same time. Here's what the terms mean:

- **Aphasia** is an impairment in the ability to use and/or comprehend words.

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- **Apraxia of speech**, or **verbal apraxia**, involves difficulty moving muscles needed to speak, even though there is no paralysis or weakness of those muscles.
- **Oral apraxia**, or **nonverbal oral apraxia**, involves difficulty moving the muscles of the lips, throat, soft palate and tongue for purposes other than speech, such as smiling or whistling.

How can family and friends help?

Loved ones, who like stroke survivors, may need help and support of a doctor, counselor and speech pathologist, should:

- Be open about the problem so others understand the situation.
- Always assume the person with aphasia can hear. Confirm their understanding with yes/no questions.
- Set up a daily routine for the person with aphasia that includes rest and time to practice skills.
- Use sentences that are short and to the point.
- Keep the noise level down and stand where the person with aphasia can see you.



- Treat the person with aphasia as an adult and include them in conversations and decision-making whenever possible.
- Help the person with aphasia cope with frustration and depression.
- Be patient. Give people with aphasia time to communicate with you. You'll respect their dignity and help reduce their stress.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit stroke.org to learn more about stroke or find local support groups.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Stroke Connection* e-news for stroke survivors and caregivers at StrokeConnection.org.
- 3 Connect with others who have also had an experience with stroke by joining our Support Network at stroke.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

How long will I need therapy?

Will my mother's aphasia improve?

How can I find a stroke or aphasia support group?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit stroke.org/LetsTalkAboutStroke to learn more.