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let's talk about  
**STROKE**

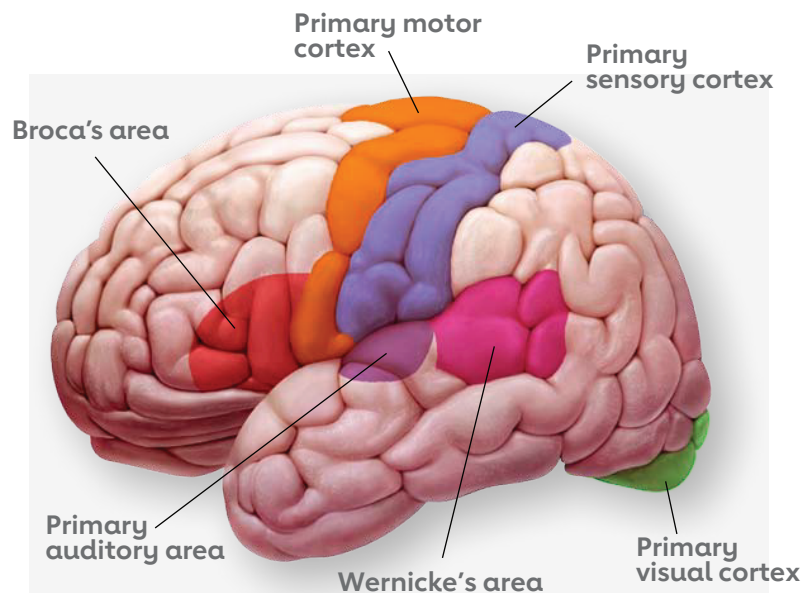


Recovery

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 areas of the brain that control speech and language.



Certain areas of the brain (usually on the left side) influence the ability to use and understand language. When a stroke occurs in one of these areas, it may result in aphasia.

## What are the effects of aphasia?

Aphasia does not affect intelligence. People with aphasia usually remain mentally alert even though their speech may be jumbled, fragmented or impossible to understand. They may have:

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

## How does it feel to have aphasia?

Imagine not being able to recognize the words in the headline of a story. What would it be like to try and say "put the car in the garage" and have it come out "put the train in the house" or "widdle tee car ung sender plissen." Aphasia often plunges alert, intelligent people into a world of jumbled communication.

People with aphasia are often frustrated and confused because they can't speak as well as they could before their stroke, they can't understand others the way they once could or both. They may act differently because of changes in their brain.

## Are there different types of aphasia?

Yes, there are several. They include:

- **Global aphasia:** People with this aphasia have a severe impairment in both forming and understanding words and sentences.
- **Broca's aphasia:** With this condition, speech is halting and difficult, marked by problems with grammar such as dropped words and sometimes impaired comprehension.
- **Wernicke's aphasia:** People with this aphasia 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 among them, especially since all three may be present at the same time. Here's a breakdown of what the terms mean:

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

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## Stroke and Aphasia

- **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?

Stroke survivors and their loved ones will need the help and support of a doctor, counselor and speech pathologist. It's a good idea for loved ones to:

- Be open about the problem so others understand the situation.
  - Always assume that the person with aphasia can hear. Confirm his or her 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 him or her in conversations and decision-making. No one likes to be ignored.
  - Help the person with aphasia cope with frustration and depression.
  - Be patient. Give people with aphasia the time they need 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](https://stroke.org) to learn more about stroke or find local support groups.
- 2 Sign up for **Stroke Connection**, a free e-newsletter for stroke survivors and caregivers, at [StrokeConnection.org](https://StrokeConnection.org).
- 3 Connect with others who have also had an experience with stroke by joining our Support Network at [stroke.org/SupportNetwork](https://stroke.org/SupportNetwork).

#### Do you have questions for your or your loved one's health care provider?

Take a few minutes to jot down your questions for the next time you see your or your loved one's health care provider.

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 to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit [stroke.org/LetsTalkAboutStroke](https://stroke.org/LetsTalkAboutStroke) to learn more.