



What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is a language or communication disorder that is a result of damage to parts of the brain responsible for language. Aphasia can occur suddenly following a stroke or head injury or it can develop slowly as the result of a brain tumour, dementia or a progressive disease of the brain.

Aphasia involves the impairment of the ability to use or understand words. It can cause difficulty with finding words to express oneself as well as difficulty with reading or writing words and sentences. Aphasia alone does not affect intelligence, but an associated cause or condition such as dementia may have an effect on cognitive abilities.

The most common cause of aphasia is a stroke. It is estimated that over a third of individuals who suffer a stroke will have some degree of aphasia. The presence of aphasia has been associated with a poorer response to stroke rehabilitation and an increased risk of mortality. Most individuals who still have moderate or severe aphasia six months after having a stroke will continue to live with some degree of aphasia.

Aphasia Impacts every part of a person's life. Individuals with aphasia know more than they can say. Because of the difficulty with expression and comprehension of language and the decreased ability to take part in interactive conversations, aphasia can:

- Mask a person's ability to participate in making their own decisions
- Affect a person's ability to communicate their needs, feelings or emotions
- Lead to a loss of self-esteem
- Affect a person's relationships and life role
- Cause social isolation
- Cause barriers to accessing services and care

Videos and other Resources:

What is Aphasia? – National Aphasia Association

<https://youtu.be/zjkgSCIXo3k>

Primary Progressive Aphasia

<https://www.aphasia.org/aphasia-resources/primary-progressive-aphasia/>

Types of Aphasia – American Stroke Association

<https://www.strokeassociation.org/en/about-stroke/effects-of-stroke/cognitive-and-communication-effects-of-stroke/types-of-aphasia>

What is Stroke, Signs of a Stroke, Treatment of a Stroke

<https://www.heartandstroke.ca/stroke>

Frequently Asked Questions about Aphasia:

<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/programs/acdp/Pages/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx>