



Aphasia

What is aphasia?

- Aphasia is a condition that decreases the ability to communicate. It can affect spoken communication, written communication, and the ability to understand language.
- Often a sign of a serious medical condition such as a stroke.
- Seek medical attention if there is a sudden onset of difficulty speaking or work recall, problems with reading and/or writing, or difficulty understanding spoken language.

Types of Aphasia

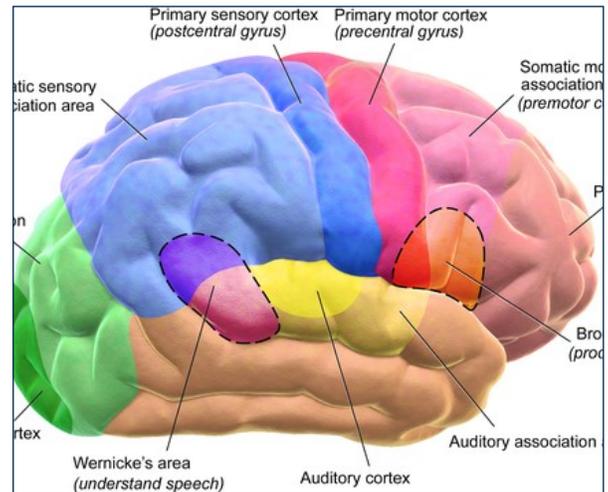
- **Global aphasia:** The result of extensive damage to the brain that interferes with all areas of the person's communication including both expression and comprehension.
- **Fluent Aphasia AKA Wernicke's Aphasia:** Often presents as a person speaking in long, complex sentences that usually do not make any sense. The person is unable to realize that they are not comprehensible. This is often a result of damage to the middle left side of the brain.
- **Non-fluent aphasia AKA Broca's Aphasia:** often presents as the person having difficulty getting the words out or expressing themselves and therefore speak in brief and short statements. The person typically comprehend what people are saying and usually aware of their deficit.

Symptoms May Include

- Speaking unrecognizable words
- Unable to comprehend during conversation
- Writing nonsensical words or sentences
- Speaking in unusually short or incomplete sentences
- Mixing up words or sounds for words

Potential Causes

- Most common cause is brain damage that is the result of a stroke because of the cell death from loss of blood to that region of the brain
- Severe head injury
- Tumor
- Infection
- Degenerative disease
- Primary progressive aphasia occurs gradually due to gradual degenerative of brain cells
- Temporary episodes of aphasia can result from migraines, seizures, or transient ischemic attacks (TIA)



Potential Complications

- Decrease quality of life
- Interfere with job, relationships, and daily activities

Diagnosis

- Physical examination
- Neurological examination
- Perform imaging tests (i.e. MRI)
- Informal observation
- Test language skills such as:
 - Naming common objects
 - Proper word use
 - Respond to questions
 - Follow specific instructions
 - Read and write specific material

Treatment

- Be prepared for a slow recovery time
- Speech and Language Rehabilitation
 - Start as soon as possible and work in a group setting when read to work on communication skills in a safe environment
 - Aims to restore as much language as possible
 - Provides compensatory strategies for the language skills unable to be regained.