

Aphasia

Aphasia happens when there is damage to the parts of the brain that control language.

Aphasia can happen after:

- Stroke
- Brain trauma
- Infection
- Brain tumors
- Aneurysm bleeds

A person with aphasia may have trouble speaking, understanding, reading, or writing. Aphasia is not a loss of intelligence.

People with aphasia may also have other changes. These changes may be muscle weakness, decreased sensation, trouble swallowing, or trouble with attention and recall.

Aphasia can range from mild to severe. Someone with a mild case may only have a few problems thinking of the word they want to say. Someone with a severe case may not be able to speak at all or understand any questions. A speech-language pathologist will work to find the language problems and provide treatment.

Expressive Aphasia

This is when a person has trouble expressing themselves, either by speaking or writing.

They may:

- Speak in single words.
- Speak in short phrases.
- Not say smaller words like “the” and “of”. Speech patterns may sound like a telegram (e.g., “go bed”).
- Put words in the wrong order (e.g., “The cake ate the girl.”).
- Switch sounds and words (e.g., bed is called table or dishwasher a “wish dasher”).
- Make up words. This is also called jargon.

Receptive Aphasia

This is when a person has trouble understanding what someone is saying or what they are reading.

They may:

- Take extra time to answer questions or follow directions.
- Not know what words mean.
- Only understand short and simple statements.
- Not know what common sayings mean (ex. “once in a blue moon”).
- Not be able to answer questions the right way.
- Not follow commands.