

Living with Aphasia



Aphasia is a problem with language.

It happens when there is **damage** to **language networks** in your brain.

Aphasia can affect:

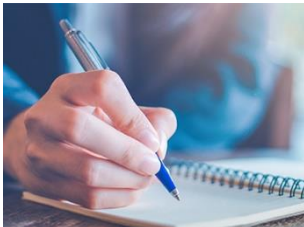
Speaking



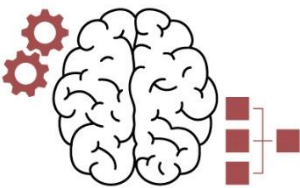
Understanding speech



Writing



Reading



Aphasia does **not** affect intelligence.

However, you might have separate challenges with memory or attention.



More than **140,000** Australians live with aphasia.

What causes aphasia?

There are many different causes of aphasia. They include:

- **Stroke** (the most common cause)
- **Brain tumour**
- **Traumatic brain injury**

Some types of **dementia**, called **primary progressive aphasia**

Language challenges

Aphasia affects people **differently**.

You might have **different challenges** to others with aphasia.

Below are some **common language challenges** in aphasia

Speaking



- Finding the words you need
- Choosing the correct word
- Forming sentences
- Saying words correctly

Having difficulty speaking can be very frustrating at times.

Understanding speech



You may need **more time** to understand speech.

Long or **complex** sentences are usually **more difficult** to understand.

Writing



Spelling words and writing **sentences** can be difficult. Typing and handwriting are both affected.

Reading



Reading is often challenging in aphasia. Long or complex text is often harder.

Living with Aphasia

Aphasia can **impact** your:

- 💖 Relationships
- 💼 Career
- 🏥 Healthcare
- 👤 Identity

- 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Family
- ⚽ Leisure
- 😞😌 Mental Health



People with aphasia need support from friends, family and professionals.
Without support, they can become **depressed** or **anxious**.

What helps?



It is important to:

1. Find the best way to **communicate** with family and friends
2. Keep **socialising**

In all types of aphasia, **practising communication** is helpful.

Teaching others how to help communication is also important.



For example:

- You can tell people you need **extra time** to talk.
- You can ask them to **write down key words** for you.

How speech pathologists can help



A speech pathologist may help by:

- Giving **information** to you and your family.
- Offering **therapy**. This could be face to face, telehealth, or self-managed therapy.
- Finding **strategies** to work around challenges.

For example:



Practising gestures in conversation



Using electronic communication devices



Setting up helpful technology

- **Teaching** family and friends the best way to **help you communicate**.
- Helping you get back to **everyday activities**. For example, shopping, work, socialising or leisure.
- Helping you plan for **living well** with aphasia.

What Else Can Help with Aphasia?

If you have aphasia, you are not alone.



There are aphasia **organisations**, such as the **Australian Aphasia Association**.

There are also **groups** for people with aphasia.




Some groups are **face-to-face**.




Some groups are **online**.

Find out more

 Information on aphasia from stroke:

<https://aphasia.org.au/about-aphasia/>

<https://enableme.org.au/resources/speech-and-language>

 Information on Primary Progressive Aphasia:

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

 Videos about aphasia:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/aphasiachannel/playlists>