



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Apraxia of speech

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

This leaflet explains what apraxia of speech is, how it may affect you, and what help and support is available for patients with apraxia.

What is apraxia of speech?

Apraxia of speech (or verbal dyspraxia) is a disorder where coordinated, voluntary speech movements are difficult to achieve, even when speech muscles are functioning normally. Common causes of apraxia of speech include stroke and brain tumours.

A person with apraxia of speech usually knows what they want to say or do but the muscles cannot carry out the instructions given by the brain.

You may find it difficult to...

- Initiate speech.
- Produce longer words.
- Copy or repeat words after someone.
- Achieve the correct mouth shapes for the different speech sounds.
- Correct your speech errors. For example, you may 'get stuck' on words (i.e. repeating previously produced words involuntarily) and/or your sounds may come out in a different order each time a word is repeated, e.g. flower→fowler→flowler.

You may find it easier to:

- Produce spontaneous phrases e.g. 'I'm fine thanks!'
- Engage in automatic tasks, such as counting or singing.

Top tips for communication

- Minimise background noise and distractions.
- Relax and take your time.
- Use short sentences and frequent pauses for breath.
- Emphasise important words.
- Break down longer words.
- Use writing, pointing and/or drawing when speech is difficult.

Friends and family can help by...

- Allowing time for the person to respond.
- Providing visual (mouth shape) cues for sounds to the person with apraxia of speech.
- Encouraging use of gesture, writing and/or pointing to support communication.

How can speech and language therapists help?

- Assess your speech and any other communication-related problems.
- Give strategies to support your speech and communication.
- Develop your personal goals, alongside you, your friends, and family.

Sources of further support:

The Stroke Association www.stroke.org.uk

Contact us

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To find out more about our Trust visit

www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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