



Communication is much more than words

Mailing address:
Unit E 1300 18th Street, Office 156,
Brandon Mb, R7A 6X7

westmanaphasia@gmail.com

www.westmanaphasia.ca

FAQs about Aphasia

1. What is aphasia?

Aphasia..... is a language or communication disorder.

..... is a result of damage to parts of the brain responsible for language.

..... can cause difficulty with:

- finding words to express oneself;
- reading or writing words and sentences;
- numbers, affecting understanding of time and ability to manage finances.

2. What is the cause of aphasia?

Aphasia is most often caused by a stroke and over a third of individuals who suffer a stroke will have some degree of aphasia. It can also result from a head injury, a brain tumour, dementia, or a progressive disease of the brain.

3. What are the impacts of aphasia?

a) Impact on *quality of life*

Emotional and psychosocial changes commonly occur in the individual who has aphasia and in their caregivers and families. These can include:

- high risk of social and emotional isolation,
- depression,
- aphasia-related abuse,
- reduced functional recovery,
- caregiver stress and illness, and
- reduced access to healthcare information and social services.

b) Impact on the *health care system*

The presence of aphasia has been associated with:

- general decreased response to stroke rehabilitation interventions,
- increased risk of death,
- longer hospital stays,
- increased use of rehabilitation services, and
- more frequent discharge to long term care facilities.

4. Can an individual recover from aphasia?

If aphasia is still present six (6) months after a stroke or head injury, most individuals will have some degree of aphasia for the rest of their lives. ***It is important to note that some of these individuals with chronic aphasia can continue to improve over a period of years, and even decades, with long term speech therapy and support, and continued socialization and engagement in the community.***

Improvement is often a ***slow process that usually involves both helping the individual and their family to understand aphasia and learn new supportive strategies for communicating.***

5. How can I communicate with an individual who has aphasia?

It is important to know how aphasia affects communication and understand that the old ways of communicating may not work and needs to be adjusted when you are conversing with an individual who has aphasia.

The Aphasia Institute in Canada has developed a program called *Supportive Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™)* which is a communication approach that uses different tools and techniques to support conversation when communicating with someone who has aphasia. These tools include using:

- spoken and written keywords
- body language and gestures
- drawings
- resources such as communication books/pages
- detailed pictographs

There are several aphasia resources online that provide helpful communication tools and tips.

6. Are there local resources for individuals who have aphasia and their families?

Westman Aphasia Inc (WAI) provides conversation groups and support for individuals who have aphasia, education and support for their family and caregivers, and SCA™ workshops for caregivers, family, and healthcare professionals.

Assistance and sharing of resources can be provided through phone calls and virtual meetings when in-person meetings are not possible.

WAI provides information on programs and services as well as resources for individuals who have aphasia, their families and caregivers, and health professionals on the organization's website at:

<https://www.westmanaphasia.ca/>