

- ✓ If you still can't understand, try asking questions which can be answered by "yes" or "no". Or ask questions with choices, such as "would you like coffee or tea?"
- ✘ Try not to shout. Apraxia does not affect a person's hearing.
- ✘ Don't be too picky. If you understood the person's message, don't worry if it wasn't perfectly spoken.

*One in a series of pamphlets about  
speech and language after  
Illness or Injury to the Brain*

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**Learning About...**

# **Apraxia**



## Learning about Apraxia

Some illnesses or injuries can cause damage to part of the brain. For example, a stroke is when a blood vessel in the brain gets blocked or when it bursts.

A stroke can result in many different problems depending on the part and amount of the brain that is damaged.

This pamphlet explains the effect on speech known as “apraxia”.

- A person with apraxia knows what she or he wants to say, but the sounds come out “jumbled up”. Sometimes the wrong sounds come out, sometimes they are in the wrong order, and sometimes the sounds don’t come out at all. And the harder a person tries, the worse it seems to get!
- If someone only has apraxia, he or she is able to think just fine. In fact, the person can understand you. Most importantly, the individual’s intelligence has not changed.
- The speech of someone with apraxia sounds unusual because of the jumbled sounds. This occurs because the illness or injury has made it difficult for the brain to “translate” thoughts into the tongue and lip movements needed to speak.

## SO WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

The best thing to do is to speak with the person who has apraxia and with this person’s speech therapist. The speech therapist will be able to give you specific ideas about how you can help.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when speaking with a person who has apraxia:

- ✓ Stay relaxed and allow the person enough time to speak. The apraxia will get worse if the person is rushed or excited.
- ✓ Make sure the topic of conversation is clearly established.
- ✓ Encourage the person to use different ways of “speaking”, such as pointing, gesturing, drawing simple pictures, or writing down some words. Using this suggestion is like giving someone a cane to help them walk.