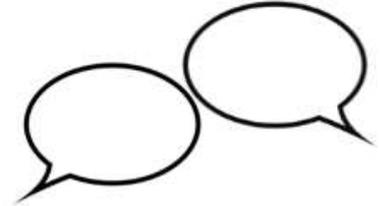


## Speech and Language Therapy – Apraxia of Speech

### Introduction

This leaflet provides information to patients and their families about Apraxia of speech.



### What is Apraxia of Speech?

Apraxia of speech is a motor-speech disorder that occurs when the messages from the brain to the mouth are disrupted. This means that a person has difficulty controlling the muscles used for speech.

### What Causes Apraxia of Speech?

Apraxia of speech is caused when the area of the brain that controls coordinated muscle movement is damaged. The muscles themselves are often functional however the person has difficulty controlling them. This can be caused by:

- Stroke
- Brain injury
- Brain tumours
- Dementia
- Progressive neurological disorders

### What you may notice

People with apraxia of speech have difficulty controlling the muscles used to initiate and form the sounds needed for speech.

Someone with apraxia of speech may:

- Have difficulty moving the tongue, lips and jaw. There may be groping movements with the mouth as the person tries to speak.
- Not have a normal rate or rhythm of speech – it will sound slow and halting.
- Make inconsistent errors in their speech – they may be able to say a word once, but not repeat it, or it may sound different the next time.

- Be able to produce ‘every day phrases’ more easily, especially when relaxed. For example “I’m well, thank you” may be produced clearly, while more complex words and sentences are harder to produce.

## How can Speech and Language Therapy help?

- Provision of targeted assessment and therapy for apraxia of speech
- Communication partner training: Providing information and strategies to the person’s family and friends to facilitate more effective communication.
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) – Speech and language therapists may assess whether a person may benefit from using alphabet charts, picture boards or apps to facilitate communication.
- Personalised therapy around goals that matter to the person affected e.g. saying family names, asking for a cup of coffee
- Total communication strategies: Teaching a person to use alternative methods of communication to support their spoken communication e.g. drawing, gesture, writing, facial expression.

## Communication Strategies

- Plan what you want to say before you say it – speak slowly.
- Write, draw, point or use facial expressions to support what you want to say.
- Stay calm – it’s okay to take a break and come back later. Avoid important conversations when you’re feeling tired.
- Break longer words or phrases down into smaller chunks – use shorter words.
- Try rephrasing what you want to say – saying it another way may be easier.
- Some people find that speaking using a melody or singing can help words come out more easily.

## Tips for Family and Friends

- Use yes/no questions to clarify what is being said.
- Be patient and allow plenty of time to communicate.
- Establish the topic e.g. “are we talking about...”
- Every now and then, repeat back what you have understood and check that it is correct, then work on clarifying parts of the conversation that are unclear. Don’t pretend to understand – try another approach or agree to come back to it later.