

WHAT IS APHASIA?

From time to time, we all forget a word or a name. But if you're being alerted to a pattern of forgetfulness or inability to communicate in your day-to-day activities, it may indicate a more serious issue.

Neurological changes to the brain can be devastating, but diagnosis can enable you to access the right therapy.

With the family of US actor Bruce Willis announcing that he has been diagnosed with aphasia, the world's attention has been drawn anew to this cognitive disorder.

Johns Hopkins Medicine describes aphasia as a language disorder that stems from damage to the area of the brain that deals with expression and comprehension of language. It renders the patient unable to communicate with others in the way they want to, and eventually can prevent them from taking part in everyday activities.

What causes aphasia?

According to Dr Shazam Hussain, director of the Cerebrovascular Center at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, strokes resulting in brain damage are the number one cause of aphasia. Degenerative conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer's are other causes. Brain injuries, brain tumours, brain infections and gunshot wounds are additional triggers, according to the US National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

There are different types of aphasia

- Expressive aphasia is when patients experience difficulty speaking in complete sentences, and they may struggle to remember words for certain objects.
- Receptive aphasia is when patients experience confusion when they're spoken to.



- Global aphasia is when the language modes are affected, and the patient struggles to speak, understand, read and write.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the symptoms of aphasia include:

- Speaking unrecognisable words
- Uttering sentences that make no sense
- Being unable to follow another's conversation
- Substituting words or sounds for another
- Speaking in short or incomplete sentences

Warning signs

Aphasia usually occurs in patients over the age of 65, but it can happen at any time. According to Dr Hussain, you may notice sentences becoming shorter, until individuals get to a point where they can't express language at all. Reading and writing ability can also decrease.

“Everyone can have periods where they're busy or distracted, or forgetting a word,” Dr Hussain says. But you should keep an eye on it, and seek medical attention, if necessary.

Treatment

Unfortunately, currently there is no cure for aphasia. However, speech and occupational therapy can help to prevent further decline. Speak to your doctor about treatment options.

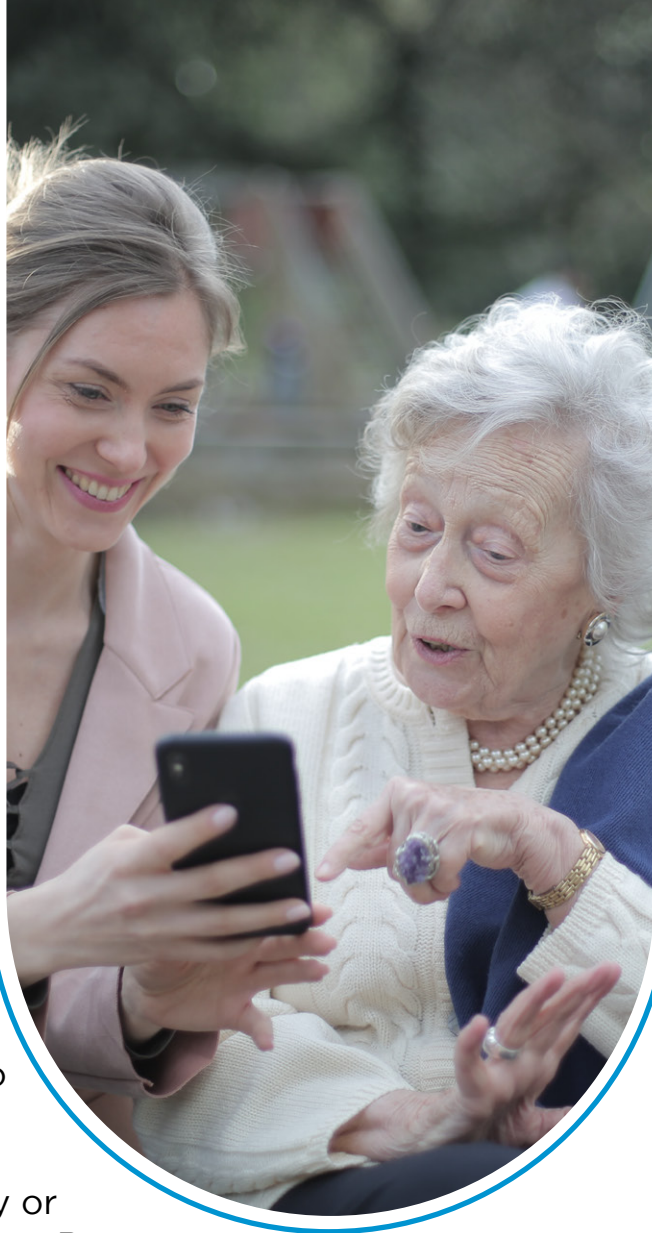
If you or your loved one needs support during this time, reach out to your ICAS EHWP via your toll-free number or the ICAS On-the-Go App to seek counselling support.

Toll-free:
(from land and mobile phones)

Or request a call back: ***134*905#**

Company App Code:

Applicable to you and those who live under your roof



References:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/well/mind/aphasia-symptoms-treatment.html?searchResultPosition=1>

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/aphasia>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/aphasia/symptoms-causes/syc-20369518>