



Let's
Talk

Apraxia: When You Have Trouble Speaking

“ My grandmother had a stroke a few months ago. Since then she has had trouble speaking. Sometimes what she says sounds normal, but other times she can't get the right sounds out. Her speech sounds choppy and slow to other people. ”

—Marissa

What If You Couldn't Talk the Way You Used To?

When we talk, we put sounds together to form words and sentences. If you have had a stroke or brain injury, you may have problems making those sounds. It might be hard to get your mouth to move the way you want. This is called apraxia.

Having apraxia does not mean that the muscles of your mouth are weak. It means that you have trouble getting your mouth to do what you want it to do. As a result:

- It might be very hard to repeat words or sentences.
- Some sounds and words may be harder to say than others.
- You may be frustrated because you don't always know when you will have trouble—sometimes it will be easier to talk, and sometimes it will be harder.

Speech-Language Pathologists Can Help

Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, work with people who have apraxia. SLPs work in hospitals, clinics, private offices, and nursing homes, and can even come to your home.

Your SLP will test you to find out how well you can say words, phrases, and sentences. Your SLP may ask you to do some things with your lips and tongue, like blowing, smiling, and making different sounds. Some things may be easy to do, and some may be very hard.

Fast facts

- Apraxia (uh-*prax*-ee-uh) can affect your speech after a stroke.
- Adults with apraxia know what they want to say but can't get it out.
- Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can help.



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The SLP will also check to see if you have any problems understanding, reading, writing, and thinking of words. Your SLP can also help if you are having any trouble chewing or swallowing.

Together, you will develop a plan to work on what is most important for you.

Treatment Can Make a Difference

Your SLP will work to help you relearn to control your lips and tongue and say sounds and words. This might include:

- Learning what parts of your mouth make different sounds
- Practicing sounds in front of a mirror

- Combining sounds into longer words and sentences
- Practicing smoother speech

Apraxia can be very frustrating. And it can take a long time to learn to speak clearly again.

If it is very hard for you to talk, you may need to find other ways to communicate. There are simple devices like alphabet boards that you can use to spell out the words you want to say. There are also electronic devices that can spell or say words out loud for you. Your SLP can help you find the best way to communicate.

Don't give up. You can learn to communicate better.

“After working with her SLP, my grandmother started saying short, simple sentences. When she wants to say something longer, she has to slow down and think about how to make the sounds. By saying shorter sentences, she has more success talking.”
 —Marissa

Apraxia can change your life. Help is available.

To learn more about apraxia or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call 800-638-8255 or TTY-301-296-5650.

My SLP's name is

Appointment

Compliments of
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
and