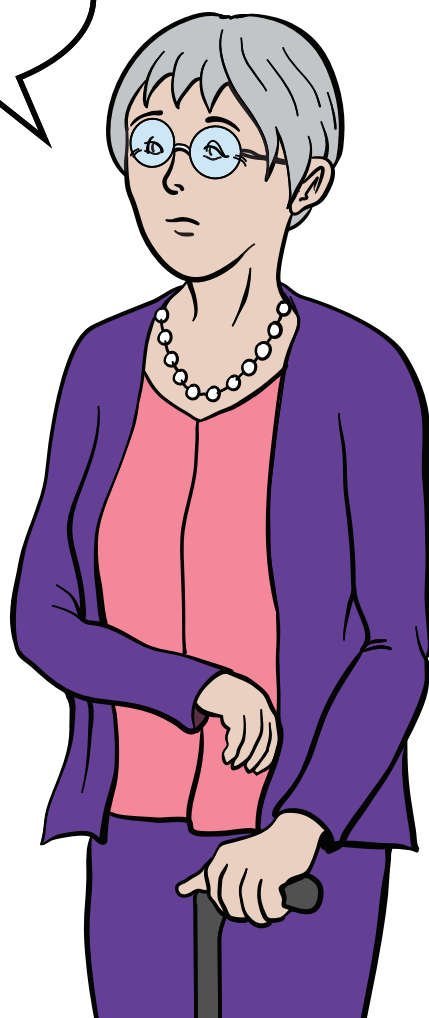
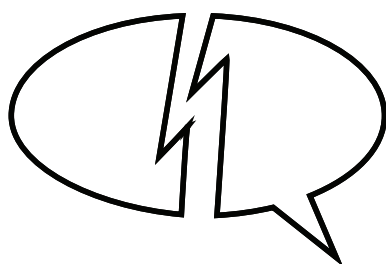


# Your communication after a stroke

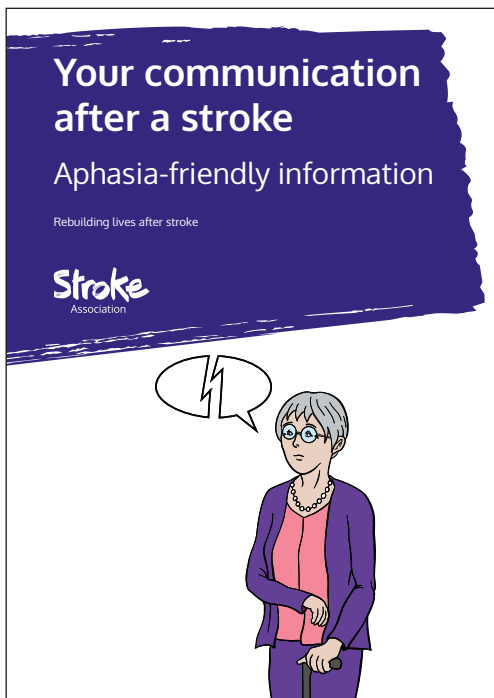
## Aphasia-friendly information

Rebuilding lives after stroke

**Stroke**  
Association



# Inside this guide



This guide is about **aphasia** and other **communication problems**.



Aphasia can make it **hard to read**.

If you **need help reading this guide**:

- **Ask someone to read with you.**
- **Ask someone to talk with you about the information.**

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# Communicating after a stroke



After a stroke, it can be **hard to communicate.**

- It can be **hard to speak and understand.**
- It can be hard to **read and write.**
- It can be hard to **use numbers.**



About **two thirds** of people have **communication problems** soon **after a stroke.**

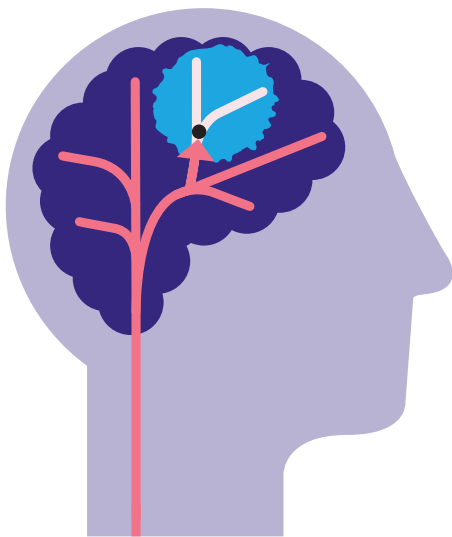
Some people will have **long-term** communication **problems.**

# What is a stroke?

A stroke is when part of your **brain loses** its **blood supply**.

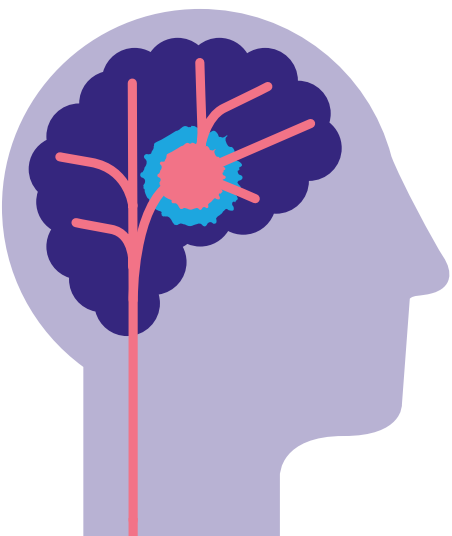
This **kills** brain **cells**.

There are **two main types of stroke**:



## 1. Ischaemic stroke:

due to a **blocked blood vessel** in the brain. It is often called a **clot**.



## 2. Haemorrhagic stroke:

due to **bleeding** in or around the brain.

# Effects of stroke



A stroke can **damage** the **language** areas of your brain.

This makes it **hard** to **communicate**.



A stroke can also **affect** how your **body** works.

It can **change** how you **think** and **feel**.

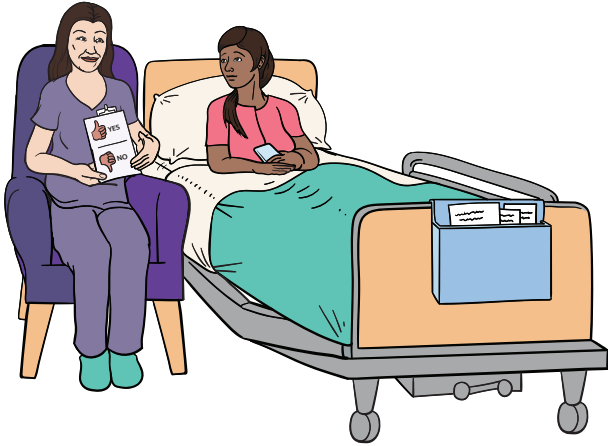
A stroke can **change** your **relationships**.



It can be **hard** to **communicate** with your **family** and **friends**.

You might feel **isolated**.

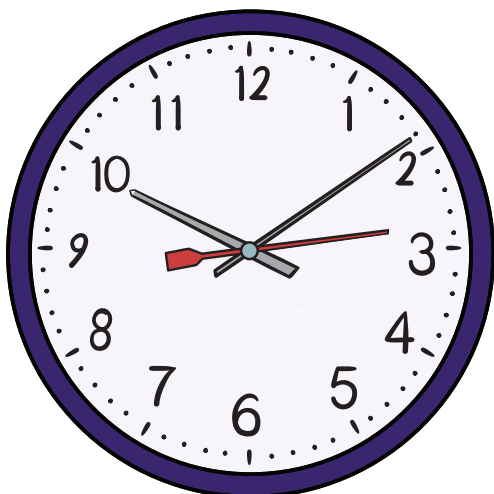
# Will my communication improve?



Recovery begins soon after a stroke.



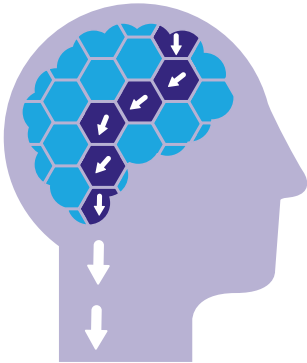
You can **keep recovering** for years.



Communication problems can **last a long time**.

You will recover at your **own speed**.

# How does recovery happen?



A stroke **damages** the connections between brain cells.



Your brain can **rebuild** the connections.



**Therapy activities** can help your recovery.



## What does recovery mean?



You might not go back to how you were **before** the **stroke**.

But many people can:

- Learn to **communicate** in **new ways**.
- **Relearn** communication skills.
- Regain **confidence**.

# How is my communication affected?



It is **different** for **everyone**.

It depends on:

1. **The part** of your **brain** that is **damaged**.
2. The **size** of the **damaged area**.



The **main types** of **communication problem** are:

- Aphasia.
- Dysarthria.
- Apraxia of speech.

You can have **more than one type** of communication problem.

# Aphasia



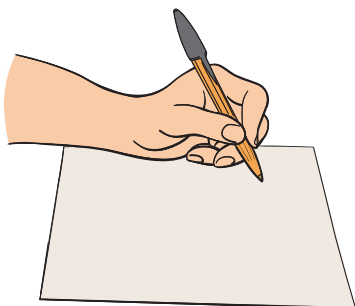
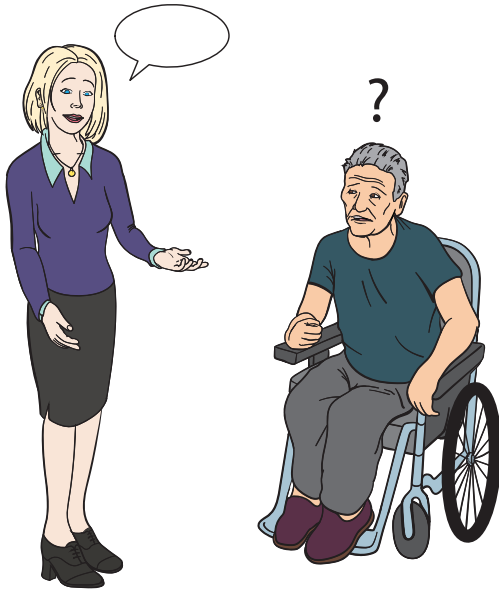
Aphasia is when the **language areas** of your brain are **damaged**.

About **40%** of people have aphasia **soon after** a stroke.



Aphasia can cause **problems** with:

- Speaking.
- Understanding what people say.
- Finding the right words.
- Reading.
- Writing.
- Using numbers.





Aphasia means you have a **problem** using **language**.

It does **not** mean you are **less intelligent**.

# Different types of aphasia

There are **two main types**:



**Expressive:** it is **hard to speak** and find the right words.



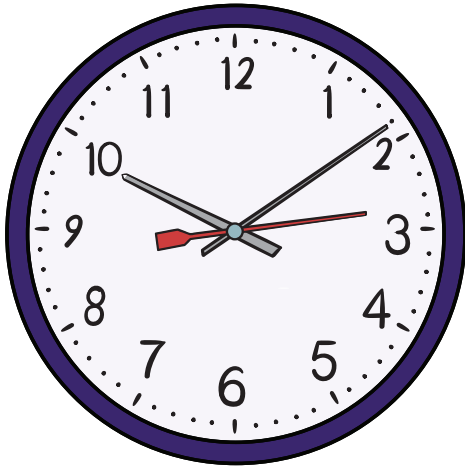
**Receptive:** it is **hard to understand words**.



You might:

- Know what you want to say but **cannot find** the **right word**.
- Get words in the **wrong order**, or use the **wrong words**.
- **Not** be able to say **many words**.
- Only make **one word** or **sound**.
- Find it more **difficult** to **understand** what people say.

# Aphasia can change



You can **recover over time**.



Aphasia can be **better** when you are **relaxed**.

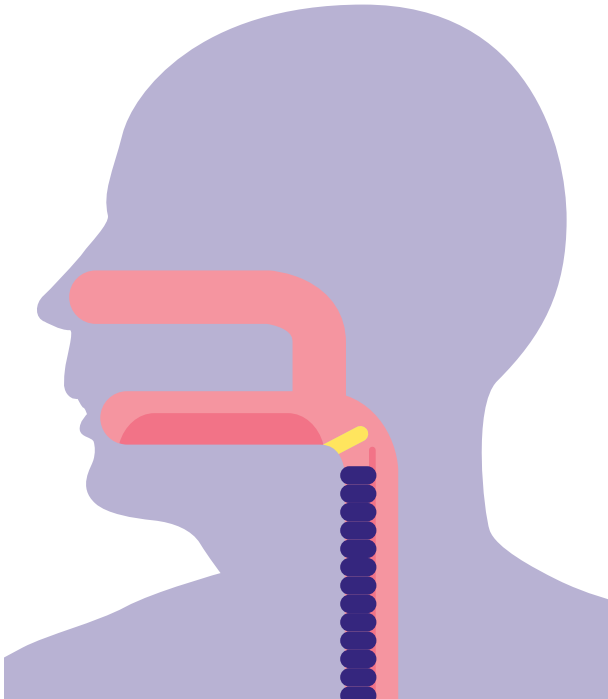


It can be **worse** when you are **tired** or **stressed**.

**Some days** will be **better** than others.



# Dysarthria



A stroke can cause **muscle weakness** in your **mouth** and **throat**.

This can make it **hard** to **speak, eat** or **drink**.

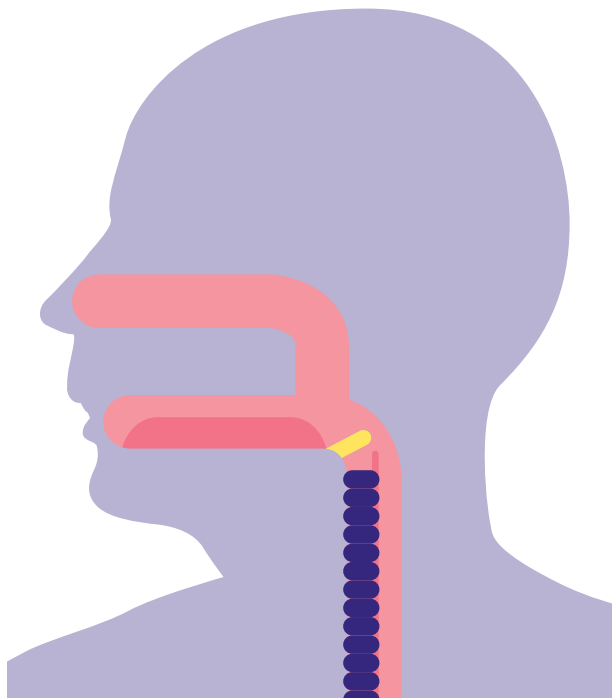
Your speech can be **slurred**.

It can be hard for **others** to **understand** you.

After a stroke:

- More than **half** of **people** have dysarthria.
- About a **quarter** of people have both **aphasia** and **dysarthria**.

# Apraxia of speech



Apraxia can make it hard to **coordinate** the movement of your **mouth** and **tongue**.

When you speak, **words** can **sound wrong**.

You might **know a word**, but **not** be able to **say** it.

## Many other things can affect communication

?



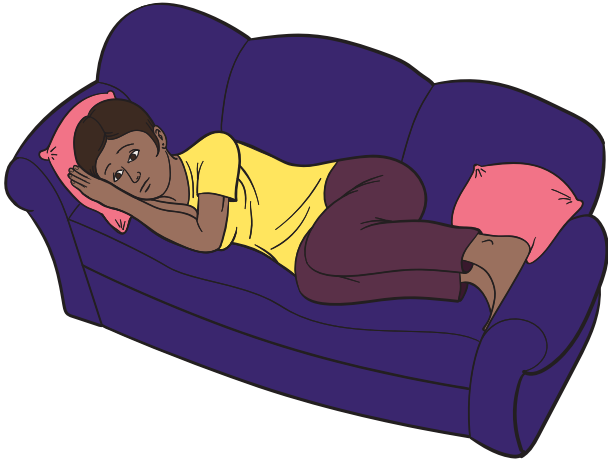
**Concentration** problems can make it hard to **follow** a **conversation**.



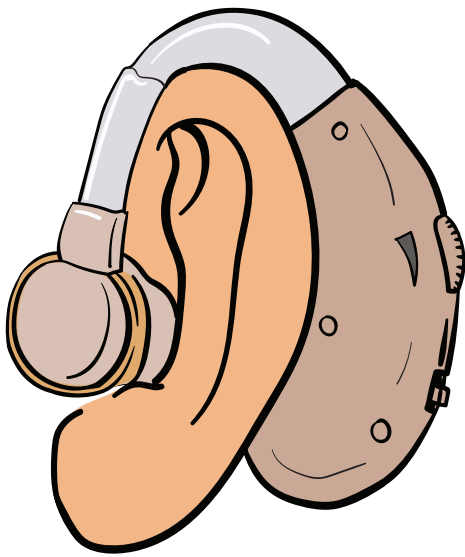
**Memory** problems can make it hard to **remember** things.



**Vision** problems can make it hard to **see**, **read** and **use** **screens**.



**Fatigue** can make it harder to **think** and **speak**.

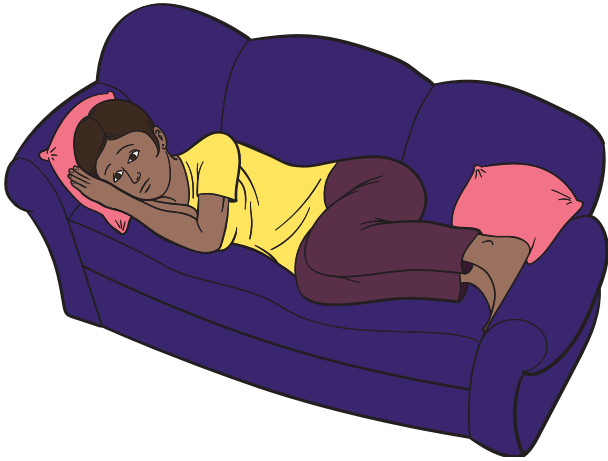


**Hearing problems** make it hard to follow a conversation.



**Feeling anxious** or **depressed** can make you avoid speaking.

# Fatigue



Fatigue is **tiredness** that does **not** get **better** with **rest**.

Most people have **fatigue** after a **stroke**.

It often gets **better over time**.



Fatigue can make it **harder** to **communicate**.

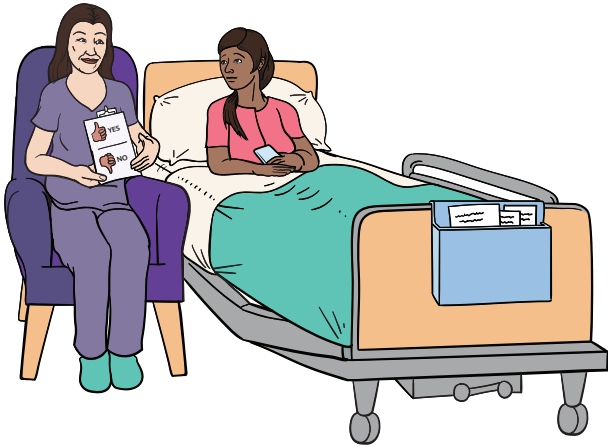
Give yourself **time** to **recover**.



**Take breaks** when you are speaking, reading or writing.

If you have fatigue, contact your **stroke nurse** or **GP**.

# Treatment for communication problems

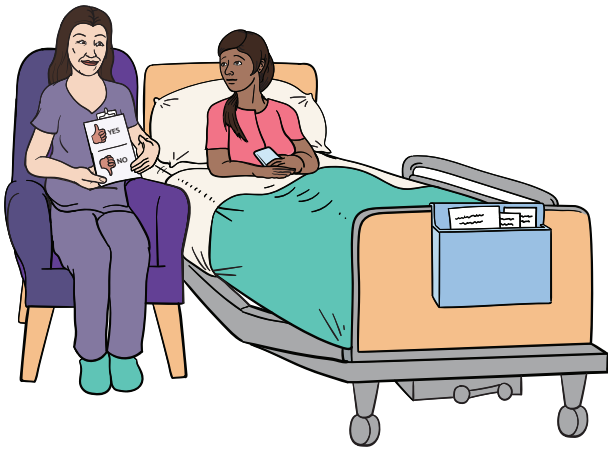


The main **treatment** is **speech** and **language therapy**.

It can help you **communicate better**.

Therapy can **help** your **family learn** how to **communicate** with you.

# How can I get speech and language therapy?



You should have **speech and language therapy soon** after a stroke.

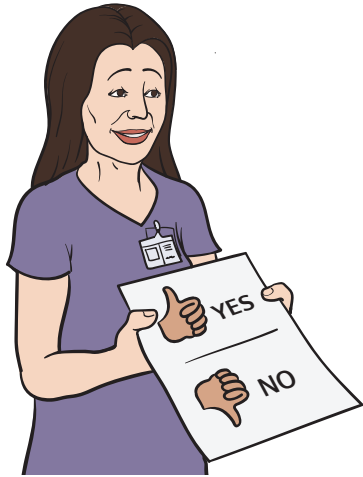
It might happen **in hospital** or after you leave.



You carry on practising at **home**.

If you **did not** get therapy, or **need more** therapy, **contact your GP**.

# What happens in speech and language therapy?



Your **therapist** will **assess** you.

Together you **agree** your **goals**.



The therapist gives you **activities** to **practise**.

The **activities** help you reach your **goals**.



The therapist will work with **you** and **your family** to help you communicate.



# What will your goals be?



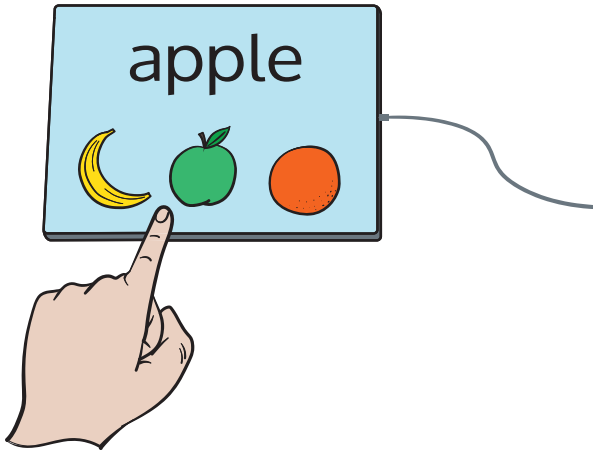
Your **goals** will be **personal** to you.

They could include:

- **Phoning** a friend.
- **Writing** a shopping list.
- Following **directions**.
- **Reading** a book.



# In therapy, you will relearn language skills



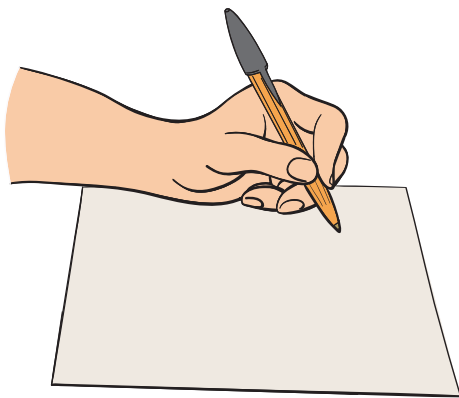
You might do **exercises** like:

- **Matching words** to pictures.
- Putting words into **categories**.
- Finding **rhyming words**.
- Making **sentences**.
- Having **conversations**.

# Learning new ways to communicate

**Communication** is more than just speech.

In therapy, you might **learn to communicate** using:



- Drawing.
- Reading.
- Listening.
- Gesture.
- Technology.
- Eye contact.
- Touch.
- Body language.
- Tone of voice.
- Facial expression.
- Writing.



# Emotions and relationships



After a **stroke**, many people feel:

- **Sad or low.**
- **Angry and frustrated.**
- A sense of **loss.**
- **Grief.**

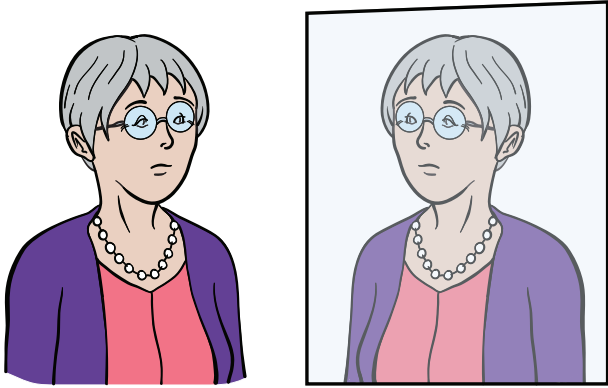
It is **common** to feel this way after a stroke.

But if you have these feelings for a **long time**, you should ask for **help**.

Contact your **GP** or your **stroke nurse**.



## How you see yourself



Communication problems can **change** your **life**.

But you are still the **same** **person**.

With support, you can find **new ways** to **communicate**.

You can find new ways to **enjoy life**.

# Your relationships



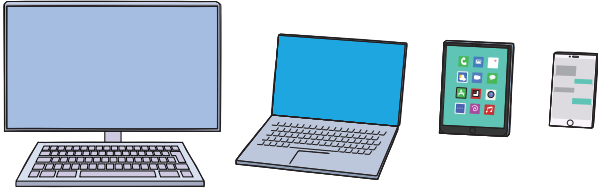
Having communication problems can **affect** your **relationships**.

You might **feel isolated**.

You could **try** some of these things:

- **Family or friends** can help you **practise** communication.
- **Meet other people** affected by stroke.
- Join a **Stroke Support Group**.
- Visit our **online community**.





- Use **technology** to keep in touch with family and friends.

- Use phone calls, emails, texts or video calls.



- Get **professional help** with relationship problems.

- Look for relationship **counselling** and family **therapy**.

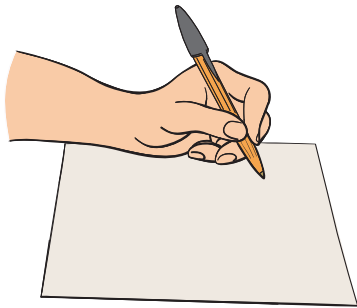


# Communication tips

## Use different ways of communicating



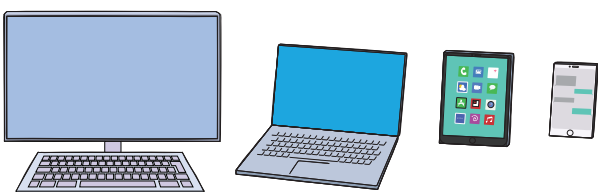
- Use **gestures**, like pointing.



- Use a pen and paper to **write** and **draw**.



- **Show pictures.**



- Use **technology**.

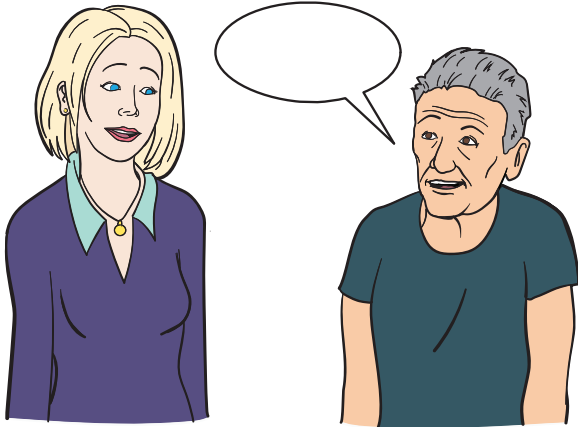


# What can help you



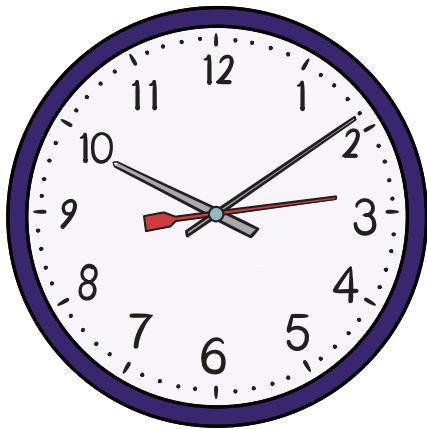
- Find a **quiet place**.
- Pick a **time** when you have some **energy**.
- Conversation is tiring: **take breaks**.

# How other people can help you



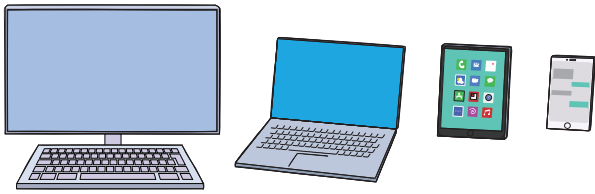
When you are **talking** to someone, they should:

- Check you **understand**.
- Check '**yes**' and '**no**' responses.
- Give their **full attention**.
- Give you **time** to speak.
- **Speak clearly** but not shout.
- Talk about **one idea** at a time.



They should remember that aphasia does **not** make you **less intelligent**.

# Using technology



Soon after a stroke, you might find it **hard** to **use technology**.

- Websites can be **hard** to **read**.
- Phone **screens** can seem too **bright**.
- **Fatigue** might make it harder to use technology.

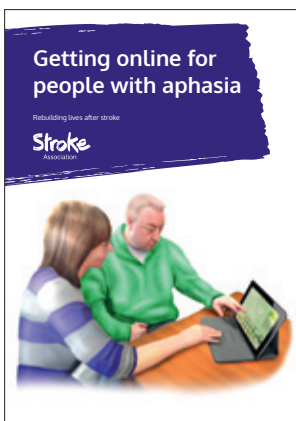
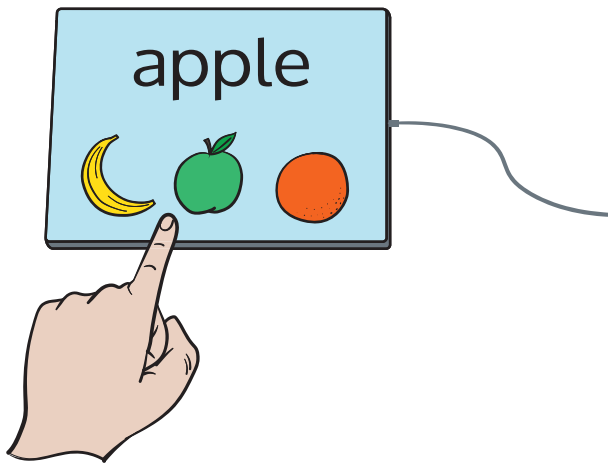


You might need to **relearn** how to **use technology**.



Many people say that **technology helps** them.

- **Videos** help you **learn** about stroke.
- **Meet** other **stroke survivors** online.
- **Look** for **support** and treatment online.
- Get **financial help** online.
- **See friends** on video calls.
- Use **therapy apps**.



Get more ideas in "Getting online for people with aphasia"  
[stroke.org.uk/getting-online](https://stroke.org.uk/getting-online)

## Use a communication card

**I have had a stroke  
and find it difficult to  
speak, read or write**

Please give me time to communicate.  
Speak clearly, taking your time and  
write down key words. Your help and  
patience would be appreciated.

A **communication card** fits  
in your wallet or **pocket**.

You can use it to **tell  
people** about your  
**communication problem**  
after a stroke.

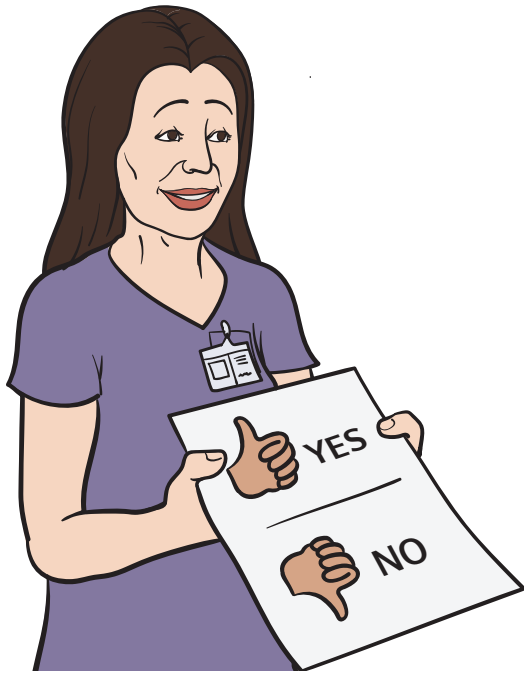


Use the card when you  
**go out**.

To order more cards, visit  
**[stroke.org.uk/aphasia](https://stroke.org.uk/aphasia)**



# How to get more information about aphasia



Speak to your **speech and language** therapist.

The **Aphasia Alliance** includes all the **aphasia** organisations in the **UK**.

[aphasiaalliance.org](http://aphasiaalliance.org)



Visit [stroke.org.uk](http://stroke.org.uk) for **videos** and **resources**.

## Using this guide for other conditions

This guide is about **communication problems** due to a **stroke**.

But it may also **help** you if you have **aphasia** due to:

- **Dementia** or primary progressive aphasia.
- Brain **tumour**.
- Head **injury**.

# Helping someone to read this information?

Here are some tips.

After a stroke, people can find it **hard** to **read** and **understand** things.



You can **help** by:

- **Talking** to them about this **information**.
- **Reading** it **aloud**.
- Looking at the **pictures** and **words** together.
- **Writing notes** on the pages.
- **Check** they **understand** with a 'yes or no', or thumbs up, thumbs down.



If you are **not sure** how to help, **ask** them.



# About our information

We create our information with **help** from **people affected** by **stroke** and **experts**.

We work hard to keep our information **up-to-date**. If we make a **mistake** we will **correct** it.

We **do not** control the information given by **other organisations** or websites.

This guide gives you **general** information.

If you have a **problem**, **speak** to your **health professionals**.

You can:

Ask a **professional** like a GP or pharmacist.



Contact our **Helpline**: 0303 3033 100



To **tell us** what you **think** of this guide, email **feedback@stroke.org.uk**

## Accessible formats

To ask for audio or braille, email **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

A **stroke** happens **every five minutes** in the UK.

Stroke **changes lives**.

**Recovery** is tough.

But with the **right specialist support** the brain can **adapt**.

Our **specialist support, research** and **campaigning** are only possible with the support of the **stroke community**.

With more **donations** and **support** we can **rebuild** even more **lives**.

## Contact us

---

We're here for you. Contact us for expert information and support by phone, email and online.

Stroke Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

From a textphone: **18001 0303 3033 100**

Email: **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

Website: **stroke.org.uk**

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Rebuilding lives after stroke

**Stroke**  
Association

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