

Aphasia

What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is the inability to use and/or comprehend language. It is commonly caused by a stroke but can also result from other brain injuries such as head trauma, brain tumours or infections. Aphasia is a loss of words, and it does not affect the individual's intelligence or ability to think. People with aphasia (PWA) know what they want and feel but have difficulties getting their message across.

Impact of Aphasia

Aphasia may affect a person's understanding, speaking, reading and/or writing. Aphasia can affect people differently – some are unable to speak at all, while others may have a few words. Some may still be able to speak fluently but have difficulties constructing their message accurately. Daily activities such as having conversations, texting, understanding signs and following instructions may suddenly become difficult for PWA. Their families and friends may also find it difficult to interact with them in conversations and through text messages. Therefore, aphasia often leads to isolation, relationship problems, anxiety and depression.

What can caregivers do to help?

- Make sure you have the individual's attention before talking
- Provide choices (e.g. tea or coffee?)
- Eliminate or minimise background noise (e.g. television) when talking
- Speak in short, simple sentences
- Speak slowly
- Be clear and introduce one idea at a time
- Allow time for the individual to respond
- Encourage the individual to use alternative forms of communication (e.g. gestures, drawing, writing, alphabet board)
- Provide opportunities for the individual to communicate (e.g. ordering meals)
- Continue social activities whenever possible (e.g. family dinners, outings)

What should caregivers refrain from doing?

- Avoid shouting
- Avoid sounding condescending (i.e. treating the individual like a child)
- Avoid rushing the individual in conversations
- Avoid frequent criticisms and corrections
- Do not ignore the individual in a conversation

Prognosis and therapy

Some spontaneous recovery of language and speech may occur without speech therapy. This occurs as the brain heals naturally in the months immediately following the brain injury. For most PWA, speech therapy is important in improving their communication skills. This may include direct work with the individual and/or training of their caregivers to be involved in therapy.

How can Speech Therapy help?

Speech therapy can help in the following ways:

1. Improve the understanding and using of language in conversations
2. PWA to return to roles that are meaningful to them (e.g. going back to work, socialising with family and friends)
3. Teach strategies to facilitate effective communication between PWA and their conversational partners
4. PWA to regain confidence in communication

Alexandra Hospital

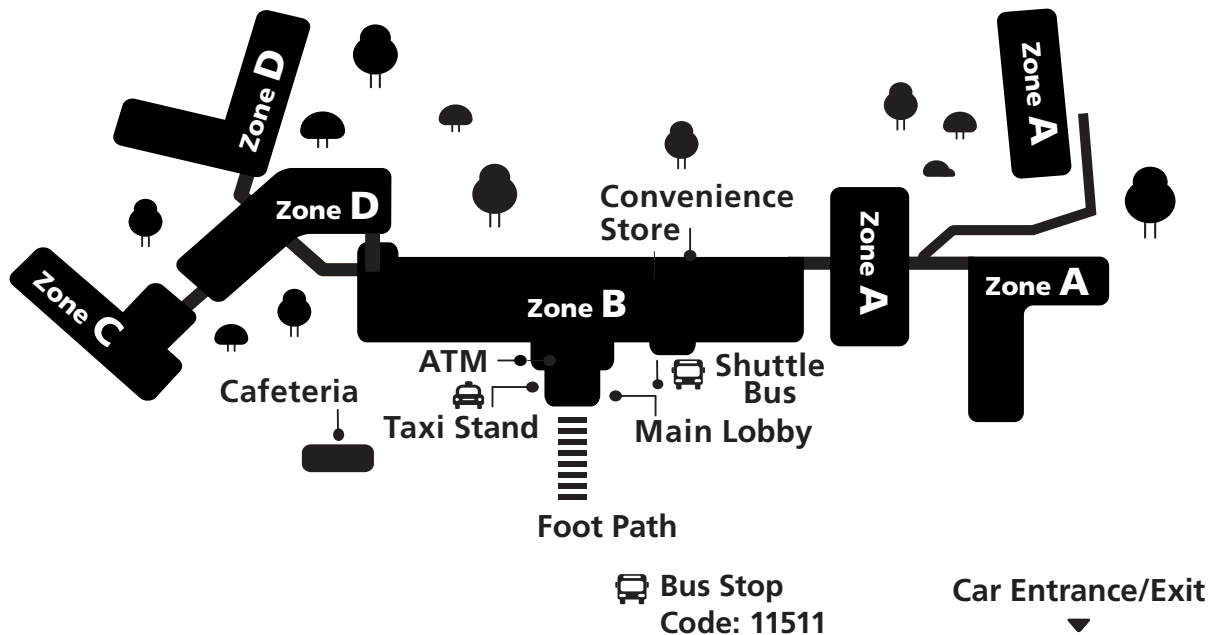
378 Alexandra Road, Singapore 159964

OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222

OneNUHS General Enquiries: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg

OneNUHS Appointments: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

www.ah.com.sg



<https://for.sg/9ce2eu>

Scan the QR code to see the full directory of facilities!

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment, or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.

© 2023, Alexandra Hospital All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or shared without prior permission from Alexandra Hospital.

Information is correct at time of printing Nov 2023 and subject to revision without prior notice.