

Apraxia of Speech

What is Apraxia of Speech?

Apraxia of Speech is a motor speech programming disorder that can result in speech that is effortful to produce and difficult to understand. This is not a result of muscle weakness but is instead an impairment in voluntary speech production (planning and forming sounds / words into speech). This is commonly caused by stroke, traumatic brain injuries, or other neurological diseases. Apraxia of Speech does not affect a person's intelligence, and ability to understand. A person with Apraxia of Speech may know exactly what they would like to say but has difficulties with the verbal production. This may lead to frustration and withdrawal from conversations.

Signs of Apraxia of Speech

The individual may experience the following:

- Difficulties initiating speech
- Difficulties imitating oral movements (e.g. sticking out their tongue)
- Difficulties sequencing sounds and words
- Inconsistent speech errors (able to say a certain word/phrase correctly once but unable to repeat it correctly)
- Increasing errors with longer words/phrases

What can caregivers do to help?

- Minimise background noises before speaking
- Allow time for the individual to speak
- Support the conversation by providing 2 to 3 choices to clarify the individual's intentions
- Encourage the individual to take breaks from talking because speech may get worse when they are tired
- Encourage the individual to use alternative forms of communication (e.g. gestures, drawing, writing, alphabet board)

How can speech therapy help?

Speech therapy can help to:

- Improve the accuracy of speech production
- Develop alternative forms of communication as necessary
- Teach strategies to facilitate effective communication between the individual and conversational partners
- Help the individual regain confidence in communication

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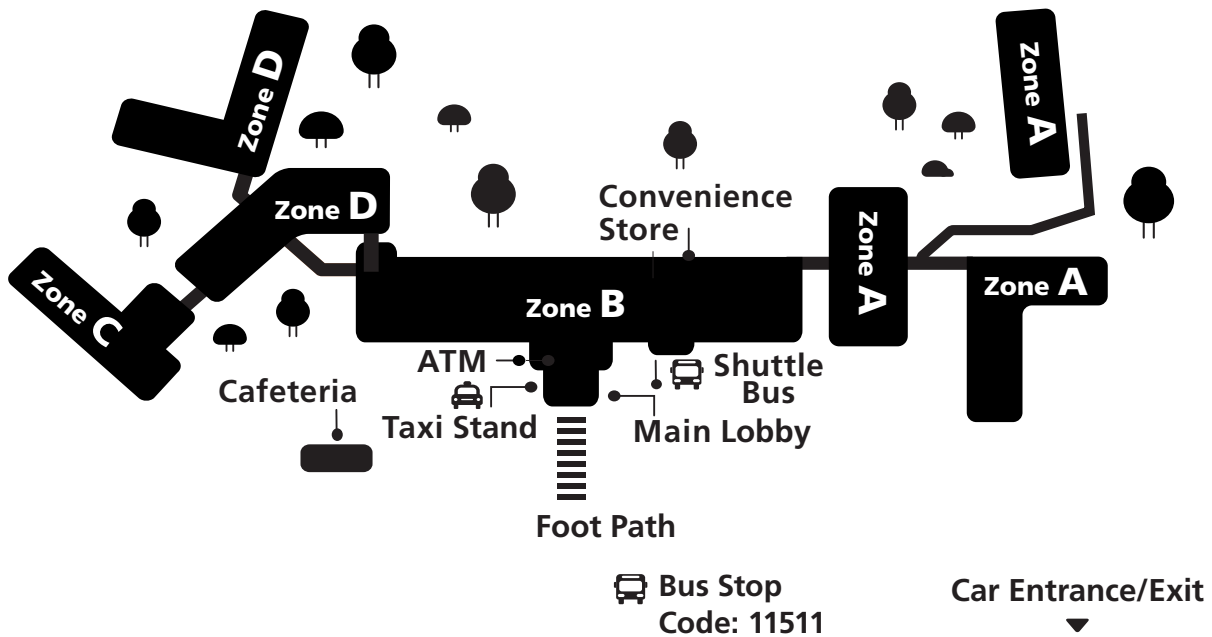
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