

Fact sheet: Communications after stroke

A stroke can occur as a result of the blood supply to the brain being suddenly cut off. This can happen in two ways – blood can stop flowing through the arteries when it gets blocked by a clot or the artery can burst. This causes brain cells to die quickly due to a lack of oxygen that the blood supplies.

Speech and communication difficulties are very common after a stroke.

Some effects of a stroke can include:

- Difficulty speaking;
- Difficulty understanding what others say;
- Reading difficulties;
- Writing difficulties;
- Understanding body language and gestures, and;
- Difficulty concentrating and planning.

Some strategies your family might use to help you include:

- Talking in short, clear sentences.
- Using gestures as well as talking.
- Using writing or pictures and checking with you that they have understood your message correctly.
- Trying not to finish your sentences unless you have agreed to this.
- Recognising that you might still understand what they are saying even though it is difficult for you to talk.
- Allowing you more time to speak, and encouraging you to persist.
- Being sensitive to the frustration or sense of loss you may experience.

Seek treatment for these issues as early as possible is very important. To achieve the best results, contact your local speech pathologist.

Speech pathologists can work with you and your family to assist in improving your speech and communication skills. This therapy is tailored to each person individual situation. This will involve practicing things you find difficult and developing ways to communicate more easily.

Some things you can do at home include:

- Continue to participate in conversations as much as possible. You may require assistance from family or friends;
- Crosswords and word searches may also be useful to assist in re-learning words;
- Writing down key words in order to get your message across to others, and;
- Try talking slowly and as clearly as possible.

More information

More information is available at Benalla Health.

Phone (03) 5761 4500 and ask to speak to a speech pathologist.