



Celebrating Better Hearing and Speech Month

Each May, [Better Hearing & Speech Month \(BHSM\)](#) provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role of audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel play in providing life-altering treatment.



Did You Know? Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can help people with, or recovering from, COVID-19 who are having short- and longer-term difficulties, in the following areas:

- **Cognition** - SLPs can work with individuals to improve their memory, attention, organization and planning, problem-solving, learning, and social communication, such as re-learning conversational rules or understanding the intent behind a message or behind nonverbal cues.
- **Swallowing** - People diagnosed with COVID-19 may experience swallowing problems that can put them at risk for choking or aspirating, which is when food goes into the lungs instead of the stomach. This may be the result of time spent on a ventilator, or it may be another side effect of the virus. SLPs may recommend modified textures of food and drink for patients; therapy exercises to strengthen the tongue, lips, and muscles in the mouth and throat; and strategies to make eating and drinking safer, such as modifying the pace of chewing/eating, size of food, and more.
- **Communication** - People diagnosed with COVID-19 are also experiencing speech and language difficulties. Some, such as those who spent a significant amount of time on a ventilator or experienced low oxygen to the brain, may have muscle weakness or reduced coordination in the muscles of the face, lips, tongue, and throat, making it difficult to talk. Others, particularly those who experienced a COVID-related stroke, may experience aphasia. SLPs work with patients through targeted therapy to improve their communication and understanding.

Also, SLPs play an integral role in a patient's post-stroke recovery plan of care to treat expressive and receptive aphasia, or difficulty speaking and/or understanding.

Thank you to all of the ATS SLP professionals who provide state-of-the-art care to those we serve!
[Contact us](#) to discuss how our team can support your patients' recovery.

Leadership Recommendations

- The Interdisciplinary Team should work closely together to develop an ongoing plan of care to address the short-term and long-term needs of patients who have had a stroke.
- Provide team members appropriate training and resources to support competencies regarding the delivery of comprehensive stroke rehabilitation.
- Encourage patients to participate in their plan of care that is customized to their specific needs and goals.
- Provide education to patients and families regarding the importance of lifestyle changes and monitoring risk factors to help prevent stroke.

Services Spotlight: Stroke Rehabilitation Services

Did you know that ATS provides stroke rehab services to patients in all care settings, including skilled nursing, assisted/independent living, outpatient and home health? Working with an Interdisciplinary Team, we combine excellent therapeutic programming with state-of-the-art equipment for a perfect rehabilitative combination.

[Contact us to learn more>](#)



ATS UPDATES

Honoring National Skilled Nursing Care Week

On behalf of the entire ATS team, we are proud to support our skilled nursing care partners for providing compassionate care to their residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we are stronger. [Download resources>](#)



Celebrate National Physical Fitness & Sports Month

Each May, the President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition encourages Americans to #MoveinMay to celebrate National Physical Fitness & Sports Month.

Ready to get moving? Check out the [Activity Planner from HHS/ODPHP](#) to set goals, choose activities you want to do, and get tips to help you stay motivated. When you're done, print your plan to track activity throughout the week.





Reflections from the ATS Team

“I am focused on staying healthy and continuing to enjoy my work and family.”

“I love working with professionals who want to improve the lives of their patients...”

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