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Right Hemisphere Brain Damage

by Natalie J. Dahl, MS, CCC-SLP

Right hemisphere brain damage, or RHD, occurs when there is damage to the right side of the brain. This side of the brain does not control language as much as the left side of the brain, but it does control thinking skills, which may be affected. RHD may be caused by traumatic brain injury (TBI), stroke, tumors, and/or infections.



RHD may show itself in a number of ways. The right side of the brain controls the following areas, which, if damaged, may cause difficulty for a person with RHD:

Area affected:	Causes difficulty with...
Attention	focusing on a task or what he or she sees or hears.
Memory	remembering previously learned information and learning new information.
Organization	logically putting information together and planning.
Orientation	knowing where he or she is, the time, or the date.
Perception	realizing that the left side of the body exists (this is called left-side neglect).
Reasoning and problem solving	knowing there is a problem or knowing how to solve a problem.
Social Communication	understanding socially acceptable language, such as jokes or nonverbal cues.

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(cont.)

If someone has RHD, a speech-language pathologist (SLP) will test his or her speech and language skills, as well as attention, memory, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. Based on the test results, the SLP will provide therapy to help improve skills. In many cases, the person with RHD is not aware of his or her deficits. If this is the case, the SLP may need to help the person become aware of the difficulties and will provide tools to help with activities of daily living. These tools might include picture cues to help cook meals or a calendar to help remember daily routines.

Right hemisphere brain damage can have a significant effect on a person, but there are tests and therapies that can help lessen the difficulties caused by RHD. The goal

for a person with RHD is to care for himself or herself as much as possible. This can be possible with the help of a speech-language pathologist and supportive family members and friends.



Resources:

“Injury in Right Hemisphere,” Brain Injury Explanation, accessed May 16, 2018, <https://www.braininjury-explanation.com/consequences/impact-by-brain-area/right-hemisphere>.

“Right Hemisphere Brain Damage (RHD),” ASHA, accessed May 16, 2018, <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/Right-Hemisphere-Brain-Damage/>

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