

## Special Consideration

(Shared by Dana Anderson dana\_anderson@cogeco.ca)  
Forwarded by Jim Gauthier to CHICA-MHIG on July 4, 2008

This was shared with me by one of our LTC ICP's, Dana Anderson, in Cannifton, ON. She is part of a group working on a small handbook for Infection Control with our Regional Infection Control Network.

### Special Considerations

People with changes in their brains often behave and react to their environments differently. Their perception of the world, their reality, is altered. These brain changes may result in care challenges because of changes in their personality, attention span, retention and processing of information (both old and new), insight, judgment, visual-spatial abilities, recall and ability to communicate.

Considering the cornerstones of infection control 1) hand washing 2) protective barriers (masks, gowns, gloves, isolation, restricting movement) 3) care of equipment (waste disposal, cleaning) and 4) the practices of staff, it is essential that persons with cognitive impairment be creatively and respectfully cared for using a person centred planning process. Think holistically about how standard infection control measures can negatively affect these vulnerable persons.

<b>Common Losses in Brain Functioning</b>	<b>What does this impairment mean?</b>	<b>Implications for Infection Control Practice</b>
Amnesia	Challenges with memory – short term (new), long term (declarative or procedural), sensory or habitual	Repeat instructions Provide explanations Use familiar &/or easily identifiable products Reintroduce self and task Provide ongoing reassurance
Aphasia	Impaired ability to give &/or understand language (words)	Identify how person best communicates – use written signage, slow /short/specific sentences, optimize hearing aids/eyeglasses, minimize distractions, use positive nonverbal expressions
Agnosia	Difficulty recognizing people, places, objects	Provide reassurance & memory triggers to cue, mime using example/action
Apraxia	Impairment in sequencing, planning, executing movement	Break tasks into simple steps, use clear reassuring communication techniques
Apathy	Inability to initiate an action	Initiate activity for person eg place soap in hand & demonstrate hand washing
Altered Perceptions	Misinterpretation of the environment	Minimize the disruptions to routines & maintain the familiar including visitors &

		activities – reassure
Anosognosia	Impaired insight - no knowledge of their disease/condition	Refrain from using logic or persuasion – can contribute to increased agitation, distrust, &/or fear Read /respond to their body language to calm and support