NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION®
HOPE AFTER STROKE

National Stroke Awareness Month

Surviving Stroke

What You Need to Know About Stroke and Long-term Disability

www.stroke.org

National Stroke Association

ADVOCATE – Influence public policy and legislation on stroke survivor issues.

EDUCATE – Spread the word about stroke awareness.

PARTICIPATE – Get involved and make a difference in the world of stroke.

What is Stroke?

A stroke is a "brain attack" that happens when blood flow to the brain is cut off and brain cells in are deprived of oxygen and begin to die.

When stroke occurs, abilities controlled by that area of the brain, such as memory and muscle control, are lost.

Stats on Stroke

- Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Every year, nearly 800,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke
- A stroke happens every 40 seconds in the U.S.

Stats on Survival

- **The earlier you respond to a stroke, the better your recovery.**

  Patients who get to the ER within three hours of their first stroke symptoms experience less disability after three months than patients who get delayed care.

- Still, stroke recovery is a lifelong process.

Stats on Recovery

- 1 in 10 recover almost completely
- 1 in 10 require care in a skilled-care or long-term care facility
- Less than 2 out of 10 of people die shortly after the stroke
- 1 in 4 people recover with minor impairments
- 4 out of 10 stroke survivors experience moderate to severe impairments requiring special care

Severity of Stroke

- **Hemorrhagic –** This type of stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain breaks and leaks blood into the brain. *Hemorrhagic strokes result in more complications than other strokes.*
- **Ischemic –** This type of stroke occurs when a blood vessel carrying blood to the brain is blocked by a blood clot.
- **TIA –** Called a transient ischemic attack, this "mini-stroke" happens when the blood flow to part of the brain stops for a short period of time.

Stroke is an EMERGENCY! Time is of the essence. Starting the recovery process as early as possible can improve chances of regaining lost brain and body function.

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There is
Hope After Stroke

Support, resources,
and rehabilitation

COME BACK STRONG™
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New Challenges

- Lost abilities
- Pain
- Nutrition
- Daily living
- Relationships
- Emotional issues

Abilities

Having a stroke can affect a person's abilities in many ways.

- Apraxia – Trouble starting and coordinating body movements
- Fatigue – Can make you feel unwell and like you are not in control of your recovery; it arrives without warning and rest does not always make it better
- Foot drop – Difficulty picking up the front part of the foot when walking
- Hemiparesis – Muscle weakness of one side of the body
- Incontinence – Muscles that help you control urine and stool are weakened, thus making it more likely to have an accident
- Paralysis – On one or both sides of the body

Abilities Cont.

- Seizures and epilepsy – In the form of spasms or convulsions
- Sleep issues – Are common and can slow recovery and lead to depression, memory problems, and night-time falls
- Speech difficulties – May involve any or all aspects of language use - speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the spoken word. Speech and language problems usually occur when a stroke affects the right side of the body and trouble communicating can be very frustrating.
- Vision and perception problems – The optic nerves from each eye travel the length of the brain and there are many and varied ways stroke can affect survivor's vision and perception.

Pain

Stroke can result in:

- Local pain in the joints
- Pain, numbness, or tingling in the limbs
- Limited coordination and muscle movement, along with painful muscle spasms in the arms and legs
- Further injury and pain because the brain may not be able to understand the body's normal responses to touch, warmth, cold, or other pain

Appearance

- Stroke can affect the ability to dress and groom.
- It also can result in dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) and eating difficulties which can affect weight, diet, and nutrition.
- Stroke survivors also can experience skin problems including dryness, itching, and rash.

Daily Living Skills

- Stroke can affect cognitive abilities, such as reading, writing, learning, understanding, and reasoning.
- It can impair verbal memory (information having to do with words) and visual memory (information having to do with things you see).
- It can impact the ability to do activities such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, and driving.

Emotional Issues

Stroke can cause:

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Anger
- Sadness
- Sense of loss
- Depression
- Pseudobulbar Affect (PBA) – Outbursts of uncontrollable crying or laughing

Relationship Issues

Because stroke can have such an impact on people's personalities and moods, it can also have an impact on relationships. Stroke can lead to interpersonal issues involving:

- Sexuality and intimacy
- Communication
- Behavior

But There is Help

- **Inpatient rehabilitation:**
  You may receive care at these facilities for several weeks.
- **Outpatient rehabilitation:**
  You may come to these facilities for appointments and then return home each evening.
- **Homebound therapy:**
  Your rehabilitation team members come to your home to provide therapy.
- **Community-based programs:**
  These programs may be available through your local hospital or senior center.

Physical Therapy

- Regain the use of stroke-impaired limbs
- Learn how to compensate for abilities you may have lost
- Improve range of motion
- Build strength and endurance
- Work to regain independence

Occupational Therapy

- Improve motor and sensory abilities
- Relearn skills for daily living, driving, and other activities
- Improve coordination
- Learn solutions to ongoing challenges

Speech Language Therapy

- Relearn language skills
- Improve comprehension
- Restore swallowing ability
- Develop problem-solving and social skills
- Learn other communication techniques

Vocational Therapy

- Identify vocational strengths and opportunities
- Get help with resume writing and job searches
- Learn about protections under the American with Disabilities Act of 1990

Preventing Another Stroke

- Take action to control circulation problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and heart disease.
- Stop smoking.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation.
- Exercise daily.
- Reduce your intake of fat and sodium.

You CAN do This!

And all these things can help:

- Working with a team of qualified experts in stroke recovery
- Striving hard toward your goals
- Doing your exercises and therapy as prescribed
- Having supportive family and friends
- Staying positive!

Survivors Everywhere

"I really believe I was given a second chance and a wakeup call and I am going to take advantage of this gift to be able to spend many more years with my wife, kids and family..."

— Brian

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“I am here today because of my loving wife getting me to the hospital in a timely manner, the medication I was given when I got there, and for the caring ER staff.”

— Tyrone

We're Here to Help!

National Stroke Association offers:

- Resources: brochures, fact sheets, decision making tools
- Health games and mobile applications
- Advocacy
- Support
- Hope

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Learn more at stroke.org