

# Your Stroke Recovery Plan

After you've had a stroke, your healthcare team will review your condition and develop a recovery plan especially for you to help you regain any lost function and prevent another stroke.

Your recovery plan may include: taking medications, rehabilitation, making lifestyle changes and getting support.

Your healthcare provider may prescribe medications to reduce your risk factors for another stroke such as: high blood pressure, uncontrolled diabetes, high cholesterol, and atrial fibrillation or an irregular heartbeat.

Depending on the type of stroke you've had, your healthcare provider may recommend taking Aspirin or another blood thinner to help reduce the risk of clotting. Clotting could cause another blockage and lead to another stroke.

It is important to take all of your medications as directed. Never stop taking them without first talking to your healthcare provider.

You may need rehabilitation to help you relearn certain functions.

There are different types of activities that can help you after a stroke. You may work with different healthcare team members called therapists on these activities.

A speech therapist can help you work on any communication problems you may be having. For example, you may have trouble forming words or saying the right words after a stroke.

*"A lot of people will say, 'Well, my speech is fine. Why do I have orders for speech therapy?' but that is our main deal, is speech and language skills. But also, we're working on swallowing and cognitive skills, too."*

A physical therapist can help you improve your movements and muscle control.

*"In PT we're mostly working on their functional mobility, their ability to move in bed, getting in and out of bed, their ability to get in and out of a chair, their ability to ambulate and climb any stairs that they might need to climb. We're also looking at their balance, and we're looking at their strength and all the motor control of their lower extremities."*

And an occupational therapist can help you relearn everyday life skills like dressing and feeding yourself.

*"Occupational therapy is helping people to get better and regain their independence in everyday activities. So as simple as brushing your teeth to combing your hair to going to the bathroom, to cooking, to cleaning, helping them get that independence back."*

It's normal to feel overwhelmed or frustrated by your rehabilitation progress but keep at it. Continue working with your therapists, sometimes progress may be slow but other times you may see progress quickly.

*"I couldn't move my right side at all. They had me up and walking the first day, trying to climb stairs, which I thought was very, very strange, when you can't really move your right leg, so it progressed from there."*

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You and your healthcare team will determine what lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk of another stroke.

These lifestyle changes can include: quitting smoking, becoming more physically active, and making healthy food choices.

Making lifestyle changes all at once can be overwhelming, especially because you are also focusing on recovering from your stroke.

So, take it one step at a time and make gradual changes to see long-term success.

Your healthcare provider can help you start to make those changes today.

Stroke recovery is a slow and steady process. You will have exciting moments of success and moments of disappointment. You may need some emotional support along the way.

Talk to your healthcare provider about ways to get support. Family, friends, caregivers and support groups are all good options and will help you through the ups and downs as you recover.

Having a stroke can change your life. And stroke recovery is lifelong.

But with a recovery plan specific to your needs, you can begin to take the steps you need to regain your life and your health.