

After a Stroke: Your Self-Care Plan

After a stroke, it's natural to feel overwhelmed and emotional. You may not understand what happened or why.

You're healing and recovering each day, but your future may feel uncertain.

There can be so much to do and learn.

How can you make sense of all the information the hospital sent home?

It's a lot to sort through: appointments, a list of medicines, and self-care directions.

And on top of all that?

How you feel.

You may feel great some days, and others not so great.

One way to give yourself some control and peace of mind is to make a plan of your own.

Your plan can focus on three important things: your medicines, your doctor appointments, and rehabilitation.

Let's start with medicines. They can keep you healthy and out of the hospital.

It helps to know why, how, when, and what about your medicine. Your doctor can fill in the why and how.

But you'll need to know the "when" to take them and do what it takes to know you're taking them as prescribed.

Here are a couple of ideas for taking your medicine:

Use a pillbox. It should hold at least a week's worth of pills.

Set an alarm. Set your watch, an app on your phone, or a calendar on your computer to remind you when to take your medicine. A lot of medicines need to be taken at certain times of the day.

Doctor appointments are the next part of your plan.

You may have more than one doctor now, and making and keeping all of your visits is important.

And your doctors will want to see you on a regular schedule to find out how you're doing.

So, what might help you keep track of appointments?

Maybe all you need is a place where you can write everything down like a printed calendar, a calendar app, or a planner.

You might ask others for help. Your friends and family want to help, so this may be something they can do for you.

Stroke rehabilitation or rehab is the third part of your plan.

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A rehab program is one of the best ways to help you make the most of any abilities that were changed because of your stroke including how you move, how you talk, or how you think.

You'll work with a team that's trained to help you make the most of your abilities and to work on what matters most to you.

You're the most important person on the team, so find what motivates you to do any of the "homework." Maybe it's practicing techniques between appointments. Or exercising at the same time each day.

Medicines. Appointments. Rehab. Your plan can really make a difference in your recovery and healing.

So what will your first step be? A pillbox for your meds? A calendar?

You know yourself better than anyone so make your plan your personal guide for a healthy, happy future.