

Part 2: Medical Management

Communicating with the healthcare team can help you understand what happened during your loved one's stroke, what to expect during the recovery process and how to help him/her recover. As a result, you can feel less stressed and overwhelmed.

Provide the Healthcare Team With a Thorough Medical History

Information to share with your healthcare team may include:

- Past illnesses and/or diseases
- Medications
- Family history
- Previous surgeries
- Allergies

Ask Questions

- What type of stroke did he/she have? (large vessel, small vessel, ischemic hemorrhagic, etc.)
- What side of the brain did the stroke occur?
- What caused the stroke?
- What risk factors may have contributed to having the stroke? (high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, atrial fibrillation, etc.)
- How can another stroke be prevented?
- What is the likelihood of having another stroke?
- What are the potential long-term effects?
- What rehabilitation services are available?



“You have to be your healthcare advocate. Translation: Be pushy. When the stroke happened, I didn't know what to ask the doctors, and I accepted most of what they said. Eventually, I learned to speak up. As the weeks went by, I became John's voice. I asked questions and if I wasn't satisfied with the answers I'd probe until I was.”

Maily Manno,
Caregiver

- What rehabilitation services will my loved one need?
- What are your nutrition recommendations?
- How do I prepare my home for my loved one's return?
- What medications does my loved one need and how do I administer them?
 - Download the printable medicine chart at <http://bit.ly/1ko4ddq> to help manage your loved one's prescriptions.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a critical part of recovery for many stroke survivors. The greatest percentage of survivors' recovery is usually within the first year after their stroke. However, recovery may continue for years — particularly if they continually work on the areas they want to improve. But the pace of recovery after the first year will likely slow down considerably.

Rehabilitation may help improve stroke survivors' independence in many areas, including self-care, mobility, communication, cognitive and social skills. Under the doctor's direction, rehabilitation specialists provide a treatment program specifically suited to the stroke survivor's needs.

Caregivers play an essential role in stroke survivors' rehabilitation as key members of the treatment team. Caregivers should ask the healthcare team about rehabilitation services as soon as possible to ensure that their loved one is on the road to recovery immediately. Thereafter, they can talk to the doctors about how they can help with rehabilitation at home and appropriately assist with their loved one's individualized recovery plan.

Rehabilitation services may include:

- Rehabilitation nursing
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech, language, and/or hearing therapy
- Recreational therapy

- Nutritional care
- Rehabilitation counseling
- Social work
- Psychiatric or psychological treatment
- Chaplaincy
- Patient/family education
- Support groups
- Vocational evaluation
- Driver's training
- Programs to improve physical and emotional stamina to return to work

Create an Emergency Kit

In the event of an emergency, be prepared to provide the healthcare professionals with necessary information and documents. Store them in a safe location, such as a nightstand, and tell your family members and/or friends where they are located. Download a complete list of emergency documents at caregiverstress.com.

- List of key contacts (physicians, family members, etc.)
- List of medications, including doses and frequencies
- Copy of your loved one's health insurance card

More Resources

- More Tips for Communicating with Healthcare Professionals
<http://bit.ly/1cNOP04>
- Medication Information
<http://bit.ly/1gC48Ou>
- The Caregiver's Advocacy Armor
<http://bit.ly/JFMa1V>
- Assessing a Rehab Facility Checklist
<http://bit.ly/1kousAo>