

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

You have been diagnosed with stroke, also known as a brain attack. During a stroke, blood stops flowing to part of your brain. This can damage areas in the brain that control other parts of the body. Symptoms after a stroke depend on which part of the brain has been affected.

### **Stroke Risk Factors**

Once you've had a stroke, you're at greater risk for another one. Listed below are some other factors that can increase your risk for another stroke:

- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Cigarette or cigar smoking
- Diabetes
- Carotid or other artery disease
- Abuse of illegal drugs
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Certain blood disorders (i.e. sickle cell anemia)
- Excessive alcohol use
- Atrial fibrillation or other heart disease

### **Changes in Daily Living**

Performing your regular tasks may be difficult after you've had a stroke, but you can learn new ways to manage your daily activities. In fact, doing daily activities may help you to regain muscle strength and bring back function to affected limbs. Be patient, give yourself time to adjust, and appreciate the progress you make.

### **Daily Activities**

- You may be at risk of falling. Make changes to your home to help you walk more easily. A therapist will decide if you need an assistive device to walk safely.
- You may need to see an occupational or physical therapist to learn new ways of doing things. For example, you may need to make adjustments when bathing or dressing.
- Try the following tips for showering or bathing:
  - Test the water temperature with a hand or foot that was not affected by the stroke
  - Use grab bars, a shower seat, a hand-held showerhead, and a long-handled brush
- Try the following tips for dressing:
  - Dress while sitting, starting with the affected side or limb
  - Wear shirts that pull easily over your head and pants or skirts with elastic waistbands
  - Use zippers with loops attached to the pull tabs

---

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.  
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.

## **Lifestyle Changes**

- Try the following tips for dressing:
  - Take your medications exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Change your diet if your doctor tells you to. Your doctor may suggest that you cut back on salt. If so, here are some tips:
  - Limit canned, dried, packaged, and fast foods. These tend to be high in salt.
  - When you cook, season foods with herbs instead of salt
  - Don't add salt to your food at the table
- Begin an exercise program. Ask your doctor how to get started. You can benefit from simple activities such as walking or gardening.
- Have no more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- Know your cholesterol level. Follow your doctor's recommendations about how to keep cholesterol under control.
- If you are a smoker, break the smoking habit. Enroll in a stop-smoking program to improve your chances of success. Ask your doctor about medications or other methods to help you quit.

## **Follow-Up**

- Keep your medical appointments. Close follow-up is important to stroke rehabilitation and recovery.
- Some medications require blood tests to check for progress or problems. Keep follow-up appointments for any blood tests ordered by your doctors.

## **When to Seek Medical Care**

**Call 911 right away** if you have any of the following:

- Weakness, tingling, or loss of feeling on one side of your face or body
- Sudden double vision or trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble talking or slurred speech
- Trouble understanding others
- Sudden, severe headache
- Dizziness, loss of balance, or a sense of falling
- Blackouts

*Adapted from Krames On-Line*

---

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.  
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.