



QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

What is a Stroke?

A stroke or brain attack occurs when blood flow to the brain is cut off or reduced. Brain cells die or are damaged. There are two types of stroke:

- One type happens when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain. In some cases, blood vessels are too narrow for blood to pass through.
- Another type of stroke happens when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. This lets blood flow into the brain tissue.

The faster a person gets medical care after a stroke, the better the chances are that some or all damage from the stroke can be reversed.

What happens to a person who has a stroke?

The problems a person has after a stroke depend on two things:

- The part of the brain that was damaged
- The amount of damage that was done

The damage can cause physical, mental and/or emotional problems.

Physical Problems

- Weakness on one side of the body
- Inability to move one side of the body
- Trouble with balance
- Trouble moving easily
- Trouble swallowing

Mental Problems

A person may have problems with:

- Memory
- Thinking
- Learning
- Speaking
- Understanding what others say

Emotional

A person may have sudden outbursts of:

- Laughing
- Crying
- Anger

What are the tests used to detect a stroke?

First, the doctor must find out the following:

- Whether a stroke really happened
- What part of the brain was damaged
- How much damage was done to the brain

There are tests a doctor can do to find out these things. The CAT scan and MRI are two ways of taking pictures of the brain to find the problem area.

There are blood flow tests that show the doctor:

- The condition of the blood vessels
- Where clots exist
- Where blood vessels are blocked

These tests use special dyes that are put into a person's blood stream. The dyes are visible on the X-ray, and show the doctor where problem areas exist.

The third type of test is called an EEG. It tells the doctor which parts of the brain are working and which parts are not. Small metal disks are put on the patient's head. The disks are hooked up to a machine that measures activity in the brain.

What type of hospital care do patients get following a stroke?

Treatment can start when the doctor gets the results of the tests.

The doctor will try to prevent problems or another stroke. There are many medications that treat problems caused by a stroke. These medications do the following:

- Reduce blood clotting
- Treat brain swelling
- Control high blood pressure
- Treat depression

Surgery may be needed to remove a blood clot or repair a damaged blood vessel.

Once the patient's condition is stable, the hospital staff will help the patient do self-care tasks such as:

- Getting out of bed
- Moving around
- Eating

The Road to Recovery

Many patients will have some recovery within a few weeks after a stroke. Most improvements will occur within a few months after the stroke. Recovery may slowly continue for up to one year.

If a stroke was very mild, a person may go home from the hospital with little or no special training.

Rehabilitation

Some patients will undergo rehab training if it is needed. This training will help the patient learn the skills needed for self-care. The patient, family members and hospital staff will talk about the need for rehab before the patient leaves the hospital. The rehab choices depend on how severe the stroke was and how much help the patient needs.

Hospital Programs

Some patients need the type of rehab care given in a hospital. If a hospital does not offer such care, the patient can be moved to a hospital that does. Hospital rehab programs are for people who have had a severe stroke. These patients spend a lot of time with trained therapists.

Outpatient Programs

Patients who are well enough to live at home may still need some help in getting over a stroke. These patients can go to a hospital outpatient rehab program.

Home-based Programs

Therapists may come to a patient's home. They teach the skills needed to live at home with little or no outside help.

Nursing Home Care

Sometimes a person is not well enough to go home, but does not need as much care as a hospital provides. In this case, a nursing home may be a good choice for rehab. It is important to choose a nursing home that has a good rehab program. Hospital Caregivers can help find the best place for the patient.

Rehab Goals

The amount of brain damage caused by the stroke will play a big part in deciding what goals a patient can set. The patient has the right to speak up about the outcome wanted from rehab. It is important to set goals that can be reached.

Physical Goals may include the following:

- Being able to walk with or without a walker.
- Being able to use a wheelchair.
- Being able to take care of one's own needs, such as dressing, eating and bathing.
- Being able to drive a car again.
- Going back to work, part-time, full-time or in a special setting.

Social Goals may include the following:

- Being able to go to church or neighborhood events.
- Returning to old hobbies or learning new ones.
- Joining clubs or taking classes.

Emotional Goals may include the following:

- Talking with family and friends about your feelings on how the stroke has changed your relationships with others.
- Getting help if depression occurs.

What type of rehab will I need?

In the left side pocket of this folder is a set of papers. These papers will explain the type of rehab programs you need. Your care-giving team has put together this program for you. Please look it over. Talk with your care-giving team about any questions you have.

Is there any way to prevent another stroke?

People who have had a stroke are at risk of having another stroke within a year. There are changes a patient can make to reduce this risk. Medications and changes in lifestyle can improve your chances for a stroke-free future.

Here are some things you can do to help reduce your risk of another stroke:

- Stop smoking
- Lower your blood pressure
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Eat a diet low in fat and salt
- Exercise regularly
- Take the medications your doctor gives you
- Follow your doctor's orders
- Limit or stop your use of alcohol

How can I find a Doctor?

St. Vincent Charity Hospital has doctors who have special training in the treatment of strokes. To contact one of our doctors, please call:

Physician Referral Line at 1.800.223.8662

Visit our website at www.stvincentcharity.com

St. Vincent Charity Hospital

2351 East 22nd Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

216.861.6200

TTY: Ohio Relay 1.800.750.0750

Saint Luke's HealthCare Center

11201 Shaker Boulevard

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

216.721.6900

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