

Patient Guide for Post-Stroke Care



Planning for an effective recovery
at home

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A stroke can be an extremely challenging medical event to cope with and recover from; patients must simultaneously overcome physical, cognitive and emotional challenges and many stroke survivors report frustrations with the recovery process. In a recent survey of over 1000 stroke survivors, over 40% felt somewhat or not very successful in meeting their rehabilitation goals and 38% felt they lacked information relevant to their recovery. Regardless of the severity of your stroke, it is critical to take a proactive and informed approach to your post-stroke care. While leaving the hospital setting can be daunting, the return home is a major step in the recovery process and should be seen as a positive event. The information in this guide will help you understand and manage the post-stroke recovery process and ease your transition home.

Follow the advice of experts.

Even after you transition home, it is critical to maintain regular appointments with your doctors, especially your neurologist. Typically, post-stroke patients visit their neurologist at least once every six weeks early in the recovery. However, over half of stroke survivors fail to comply with recommended follow-up visits and do not see any specialists during their recovery.

Adapt your home to your needs.

Depending on the severity of your stroke, you may require medical equipment such as a walker, a wheelchair or a hospital bed in the home. In addition,

your home may require safety modifications before you can feel comfortable. Your doctors, therapists and discharge planners should be able to advise you on the equipment you will need at home.

Follow up on your blood work.

Because strokes are caused by a reduction in blood flow to the brain, your physician will usually prescribe anticoagulants to facilitate your recovery. The dosage is adjusted based on your blood flow, so regular blood testing is critical to ensuring a safe and accurate dosage. Your doctors will advise you on the proper procedure and timing for your blood work.

Understand your limitations.

We all value our independence and many of us are accustomed to an active lifestyle. However, anyone recovering from a stroke must understand that the recovery process cannot be rushed. Your brain is gradually rebuilding damaged synapses, which can cause mental fogging or a sense of mild confusion. Your body is recovering as well and activities that were once routine, such as walking or hand movement, may present new physical challenges. Understand that you can take steps to address them. Receiving support from a caregiver or a loved one can help with your physical needs and memory exercises such as keeping an activity notebook can improve cognitive function.

Do as much as you can.

Though you should never endanger yourself or risk your recovery by doing too much too soon, it is important that you attempt basic tasks with which you feel comfortable. Your efforts will facilitate your physical recovery and small accomplishments can provide a big mental boost and propel you toward your long-term goals. Take incremental steps and utilize support from family or caregivers for daily activities that pose a challenge.

Maintain your therapy schedule.

Though your therapy needs (physical, occupational or speech) may vary, it is important to start therapy as soon as possible and remain consistent with your appointments and recommended exercises. Though your initial therapy sessions may be trying, maintain focus on your long-term goals. Your therapists are trained professionals who have helped numerous post-stroke patients and can act as expert guides in the critical weeks following a stroke.

Watch your diet.

It is important to limit your intake of fat, cholesterol and sodium to prevent unnecessary stress on your body. It may be tempting to indulge in comfort foods, but a balanced diet is essential to a healthy recovery. It is also important to maintain a regular meal schedule, even though you may not be hungry. Proper nutrition and caloric intake give your body the energy it needs to heal.

Actively Planning for Discharge and Post-Hospitalization Recovery Can Smooth the Transition Home

1. Prior to Discharge

- Speak with your discharge planner as early as possible about choices for rehabilitation. Weigh the benefits of a facility versus recovery at home. Make sure to consider your own comfort, the comfort of your loved ones, your financial situation, and your physical and emotional needs.
- Honestly assess your abilities and identify areas in which you might need support. Consider

activities of daily living such as mobility, grooming and dressing, household activities such as meal preparation and transportation, and companionship needs.

- Talk to your family and friends about the level of assistance they can provide. While your family may be able to provide some care during your recovery, patients with more comprehensive or full-time needs should look to a home care provider for additional support.
- If you think you would benefit from a caregiver, contact a reputable home care provider. Home Care Assistance has a Transition Home™ Package designed specifically for the unique needs of post-hospitalization patients. It offers a personalized discharge and care plan, flexible schedules to accommodate changing needs, caregivers specifically matched to the patient and ongoing care management.

2. Recovering at Home

- Set goals and track your progress. Although incremental improvements may seem insignificant, they are actually significant steps on the path to recovery.
- Establish a routine; develop and maintain a regular schedule of meals, medication times, exercise and rest. Setting a routine for basic activities can help you acclimate to life at home.
- Ease into your post-hospitalization routine by allowing your caregiver to take on household responsibilities. Especially in your first weeks at home, your energy is limited and should be reserved for your recovery.
- Identify and manage stress when it occurs. It is common to feel agitated or frustrated when you first transition home, especially if you are less independent than you were. Acknowledge and manage stress when it occurs and recognize any emotional challenges that could lead to depression.
- If you are receiving home care, the provider should participate in developing your plan of care, establishing and maintaining your routine and providing an outlet for stress.

About Home Care Assistance



Our mission at Home Care Assistance is to change the way the world ages. We provide older adults with quality care that enables them to live happier, healthier lives at home. Our services are distinguished by the caliber of our caregivers, the responsiveness of our staff and our expertise in Live-In care. We embrace a positive, balanced approach to aging centered on the evolving needs of older adults.

- **Live-In Experts.** We specialize in **around the clock** care to help seniors live well at home.
- **Available 24/7.** Care managers are **on call** for clients and their families, even during nights and weekends.
- **High Caliber Caregivers.** We hire only **1 in 25** applicants and provide ongoing training and supervision.
- **Balanced Care.** Our unique approach to care promotes healthy **mind, body and spirit**.
- **No Long Term Contracts.** Use our services only as long as you're **100% satisfied**.
- **A Trusted Partner.** We're honored to be **Preferred Providers** for professionals in both the medical and senior communities.
- **Peace of Mind.** Independent industry surveys place our **client satisfaction** rate at 97%.



This guide is brought to you by Home Care Assistance, the leading experts in post-hospitalization care. Visit www.HospitaltoHomeCare.com and www.HCAJerseyShore.com to learn more about our services and find resources for your post-hospitalization needs.