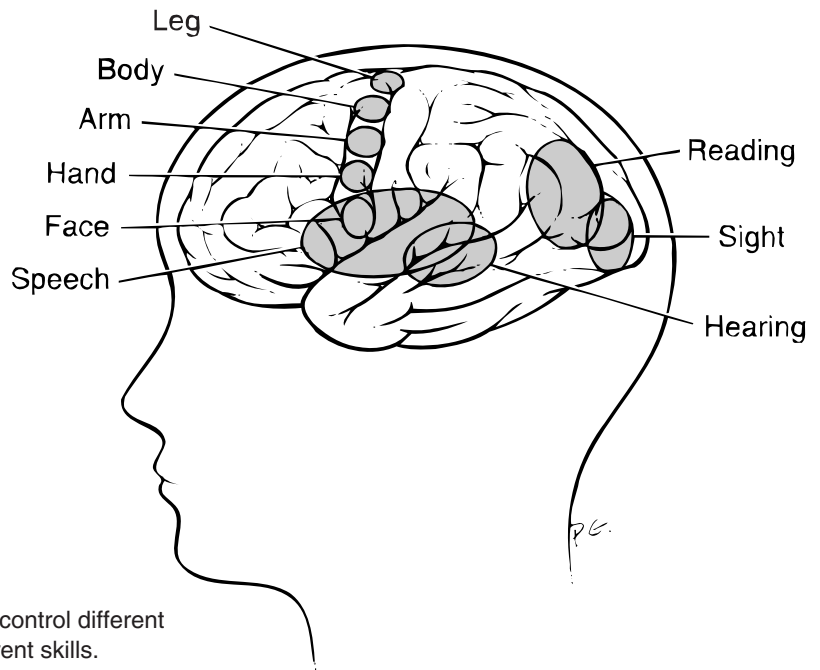


Let's Talk About Changes Caused by Stroke

What are the most common effects of stroke?

Your brain controls how you move, feel, think and behave. Brain injury from a stroke may affect any of these abilities. You may experience some of these effects of stroke:

- Hemiparesis (weakness on one side of the body) or hemiplegia (paralysis on one side of the body).
- One-sided neglect, as a result of hemiparesis or hemiplegia, motor impairment and loss of sensation on one side of the body often causes stroke survivors to ignore or forget their affected side.
- Aphasia (difficulty with speech and language) or dysphagia (trouble swallowing).
- Decreased field of vision and trouble with visual perception.
- Loss of emotional control and changes in mood.
- Cognitive changes (problems with memory, judgment, problem solving or a combination of these).
- Behavior changes (personality changes, improper language or actions).



Different parts of the brain control different parts of the body and different skills.

What are common emotional effects of stroke?

- Depression
- Apathy and lack of motivation
- Tiredness
- Frustration, anger and sadness
- Reflex crying (emotions may change rapidly and sometimes not match the mood)
- Denial of the changes caused by the brain injury

Will I get better?

In most cases people do get better. The effects of a stroke are greatest immediately after the stroke occurs. From then on, you may start to get better. How fast and how much you improve depends on the extent of the brain injury and the success of rehabilitation.

- Recovering your abilities begins after the stroke is over and you're medically stable.
- Some improvement occurs spontaneously and relates to how the brain works again after it's been injured.

- Stroke rehabilitation programs help you improve your abilities and learn new skills and coping techniques.
- Depression after stroke can interfere with rehabilitation. It's important that it be treated.
- Improvement often occurs most quickly in the first months after a stroke, then continues over years with your continued efforts.






How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. Ask about other stroke topics. This is one of many *Let's Talk About Stroke* fact sheets available.
- For more information on stroke, or to receive additional fact sheets, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at StrokeAssociation.org.
- If you or someone you know has had a stroke, call the American

Stroke Association's "Warmline" at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653), and:

- ✓ Speak with other stroke survivors and caregivers, trained to answer your questions and offer support
- ✓ Get information on stroke support groups in your area
- ✓ Sign up to get *Stroke Connection Magazine*, a free publication for stroke survivors and caregivers

What are the Warning Signs of Stroke?

-  **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
-  **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
-  **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
-  **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
-  **Sudden, severe headaches with no known cause**



Learn to recognize a stroke.
Because time lost is brain lost.

Today there are treatments that can reduce the risk of damage from the most common type of stroke, but only if you get help quickly — within 3 hours of your first symptoms.

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these warning signs!

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider:

Can other areas of the brain help the damaged part of the brain?

How do I know if I have clinical depression?

How has my stroke affected me?

The statistics in this kit were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update at americanheart.org/statistics.

The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. Your contributions will support research and educational programs that help reduce disability and death from stroke.

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