

Let's Talk About Living at Home After Stroke

Can I live at home after stroke?

Most stroke survivors are able to return home and resume many of the activities they were involved in before the stroke. Leaving the hospital may seem scary at first because so many things may have changed. The hospital staff can help prepare you for the move home or perhaps to another setting that can better provide for your needs when you leave the hospital.



How do I know if going home is the right choice?

Going home poses few problems for people who have had a minor stroke and have few lingering effects. For those whose strokes were more severe, going home depends on these four factors:

- **Ability to care for yourself.** Rehabilitation should be focused on daily activities.
- **Ability to follow medical advice.** It's important for medication to be taken as prescribed and medical advice followed.
- **A caregiver.** Someone who is willing and able to help when needed should be available.
- **Ability to move around and communicate.** If stroke survivors aren't independent in these areas, they may be at risk in an emergency or feel isolated.

What changes do I need to make at home?

Living at home successfully also depends on how well your home can be adapted to meet your needs.

- **Safety.** Take a good look around and eliminate anything that might be dangerous. This might be as simple as taking up throw rugs, testing the temperature of bath water or wearing rubber-soled shoes. Or it may be more involved, like installing handrails.
- **Accessibility.** You need to be able to move freely within the house. Modifications can be as simple as rearranging the furniture or as involved as building a ramp.
- **Independence.** Your home should be modified so that you can be as independent as possible. Often this means adding adaptive equipment like grab bars or transfer benches.

What if I can't go home?

Your doctor may advise a move from the hospital to another type of facility that can meet your needs either permanently or

temporarily. It's important that the living place you choose is safe and supports your continued recovery. Your social worker and

What if I can't go home? (continued)

case manager at the hospital can give you information about alternatives that might work for you. Possibilities include:

- **Nursing facility.** This can be a good option for someone who has ongoing medical problems.
- **Skilled nursing facility.** This is for people who need medical attention, continued therapy and more care than a caregiver can provide at home.
- **Intermediate care facility.** This is for people who don't have serious medical problems and can manage some level of self-care.
- **Assisted living.** This is for people who can live somewhat independently, but need some assistance with things like meals, medication and housekeeping.






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:

What living arrangement would you recommend for me?

Is there a possibility of a different option later?

Is there a caregiver or stroke support group available in my community?

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.

©1999-2003, 2007 American Heart Association.



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

Learn and Livesm