

### What can you do to prevent another stroke?

After a stroke, people feel lots of different emotions. Some people are worried that they could have another stroke, or they may feel overwhelmed by how much there is to learn and do. Some people feel sad or depressed.

No matter what emotions you are feeling, you can give yourself some control and peace of mind by making a plan to lower your risk of having another stroke.

#### Take your medicines

You'll need to take medicines to help prevent another stroke. Be sure to take your medicines exactly as prescribed, and don't stop taking them unless your doctor tells you to. If you stop taking your medicines, you can increase your risk of having another stroke.

Some of the medicines your doctor may prescribe include:

- Aspirin or some other blood thinner to prevent blood clots.
- Statins and other medicines to lower cholesterol.
- Blood pressure medicines to lower blood pressure.

#### Manage other health problems

You can help lower your chance of having another stroke by managing certain other health problems. Problems that increase your risk of having another stroke include:

- High blood pressure.
- High cholesterol.
- Atrial fibrillation.
- Diabetes.

If you have any of these health problems, you can manage them with healthy lifestyle changes along with medicine.

#### Adopt a healthy lifestyle

- **Do not smoke** or allow others to smoke around you. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good. Smoking makes a stroke more likely.
- **Lose weight if you need to.** Controlling your weight will help you keep your heart and body healthy.
- **Be active.** Ask your doctor what type and level of activity is safe for you.
- **Eat heart-healthy foods**, like fruits, vegetables, and high-fibre foods.

- **Limit alcohol** to 3 drinks a day for men and 2 drinks a day for women.

It's also important to:

- Get an influenza (flu) shot every year.
- Ask for help if you think you are depressed.

## **Do stroke rehab**

Taking part in a stroke rehabilitation (rehab) program will help you to regain skills you lost or make the most of your abilities after a stroke. It also helps you take steps to prevent another stroke.

Your rehab team will provide education and support to help you build new, healthy habits. You'll learn how to manage any other health problems that you might have. You'll also learn how to exercise safely, eat a healthy diet, and quit smoking if you smoke. You'll work with your team to decide what lifestyle choices are best for you.

If your doctor hasn't already suggested it, ask them if stroke rehab is right for you.

## **Know stroke symptoms**

Make sure you know the symptoms of stroke.

**FAST** is a simple way to remember. Recognizing these symptoms helps you know when to call for medical help. FAST stands for:

- **F**ace drooping.
- **A**rm weakness.
- **S**peech difficulty.
- **T**ime to call 911.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

**Current as of:** September 26, 2018

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