

Discharge Information: Stroke from Bleeding



You were treated in the hospital because a broken blood vessel cut off blood flow to part of your brain.

This handout tells you and your caregiver what you need to know about your care in the first weeks at home. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are things you do not understand.

Follow-Up Appointments

Name of Doctor	Date & Time	Phone Number
1.		
2.		
3.		



Eating Plan

Follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan to lower blood pressure.

- Limit the amount of salt (sodium) you eat.
- Eat 6 to 8 servings a day of cereal, bread, and grains.
- Eat 4 to 5 servings a day of vegetables and fruits.
- Eat 2 to 3 servings a day of fat free and low fat milk products.
- Eat 4 to 5 servings a week of nuts, seeds, and dry beans.
- Limit lean meat, chicken, and fish to no more than 2 servings a day.
- Limit foods high in fats and oils to no more than 3 servings a day.
- Limit your sweets to less than 5 servings per week.

Check with your doctor about how much salt (sodium) you can have to cut down:

- Do not add salt to food. Talk to your doctor before using salt substitutes.
- Choose fresh food to eat.
- Avoid high sodium foods.
 1. Read food labels to see how much sodium a food has per serving.
 2. Do not eat a lot of fast food.
 3. Foods high in sodium are canned foods, frozen pizza and frozen dinners, deli meats, and salty snacks.

Add more fiber to your eating plan to help prevent hard stools (constipation). Fiber is in whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.

Cut down on your risk of choking while eating.

- Sit upright for at least 30 minutes before and after eating.
- Take small bites, chew well, and eat slowly. Swallow completely before taking another bite.
- Go back and forth between bites of solid food and sips of liquid.

You may need to eat foods that are easy to chew and swallow. A speech therapist may give you a list of foods that are OK for you.

These foods are easy to chew and swallow

- Moist ground or chopped meats
- Cooked cereal
- Ripe bananas
- Soft, cooked vegetables

These foods can be hard to chew or swallow

- Whole pieces of meat and hot dogs
- Crispy fried foods
- Bagels
- Peanut butter and nuts
- Hard raw fruit and vegetables
- Hard candy

Make sure someone is with you while you eat in case you have swallowing problems or start to choke.

Do not drink alcohol, such as beer, wine, hard liquor, and mixed drinks.



Activity

You may feel tired for a while. Cut down on your energy needs.

- Sit down while you are bathing or getting dressed.
- Arrange your home so that you can do everyday things with less moving and stretching.
- Take short rests, or get help with hard chores.

Get back to your activities slowly. Start with things that help you get through your day, such as dressing, eating, and going to the bathroom.

Keep doing the exercises your therapist taught you in the hospital.

Put your legs up and rest if they are swollen.

Talk to the doctor about what exercise is best for you and make it part of your day.

Do not drive or return to work until your doctor says it is OK.



Self-Care

Keep all doctor appointments.

Wear an eye patch over one eye if you have double vision.

Make changes to help keep your blood pressure in control:

- Check your blood pressure every day.
 - Wait 30 minutes after exercise before you take your blood pressure.
 - Take your blood pressure in the same arm each time.
 - Write down your blood pressure reading in a diary to show your doctor.
- Take your medicine.
- Be at a healthy weight.

To improve your bladder control:

- Find a pattern of when you urinate. Keep a record of when you empty your bladder.
- Slowly increase the length of time you wait before you empty your bladder again.
- Tighten your bladder muscles for a few seconds and then relax them for a few seconds to control the urge to urinate.
- Drink plenty of fluids unless your doctor tells you not to.

To improve how your bowels work:

- Set a regular time for having a bowel movement, such as 30 minutes after breakfast.
- Lie on your left side if you cannot sit on a toilet.
- Help start a bowel movement by drinking warm fluids, breathing deeply, massaging your stomach, or leaning forward if you can.
- Talk to your doctor if your stools are too hard to pass easily.

Prevent pressure sores. Get help if you need it.

- Move as much as possible. Shift your weight often to relieve pressure.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Make sure clothes, casts, or splints are not rubbing the skin. Do not wear tight clothes.
- Look at your skin every day. Look for red spots or breaks in the skin.
- Keep the sheets on your bed clean and dry. Make sure there are no wrinkles.

Reduce your risk of falls.

- Keep the floor and walkways clear. Remove throw rugs. Get rid of clutter.
- Keep rooms well lighted.
- Get up slowly from sitting or lying down.
- If you wear glasses, put them on before you move around.
- Get regular exercise. This will strengthen your muscles and improve your balance.
- Know which of your medicines can make you dizzy. Talk to your doctor if this is a problem.

Prevent blood clots in your legs.

- Keep your legs propped up while lying down.
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time. If you do, stretch your legs as much as you can. Do not cross your legs while sitting.
- Do not wear socks with tight bands that leave marks on your legs.
- Wear compression stockings every day if your doctor told you to.
- Take blood thinner medicine if your doctor orders it.

If you wear elastic compression stockings on your legs:

- Make sure the stockings go on smoothly with no wrinkles.
- Do not let the stockings roll down. This can cut off blood flow to your feet.
- Wear the stockings during the day. Take them off at night. Check your skin every time you take them off.

If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar (glucose) under control.

If you smoke, you should stop now. Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.



Medicine

When you leave the hospital, you should get:

- A list of all the medicines you should take
- Prescriptions for any new medicines

Take your medicine as your doctor asked you to:

- Talk to your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Include your prescription medicines, and vitamins, herbs, and medicines you buy at the store.
- Take the medicine list to every doctor or hospital visit.
- Get the follow-up tests that your doctor orders.

Ask your doctor if you take any medicines that may cause another stroke.

Ask your doctor if you need to take any medicines so that you do not have another stroke.

These programs help you pay for prescription medicines if you cannot afford them.

- NeedyMeds. Go to: www.needymeds.org
- Partnership for Prescription Assistance. Go to: www.pparx.org or call 1.888.477.2669.

Check with your doctor to make sure you are up to date on all your vaccines.

Ask your doctor if you should have a flu or pneumonia shot.



When to Call for Emergency Help

You have a problem with how your brain and nervous system are working.

- You have trouble hearing or have problems with your vision.
- You are not responding to things or the people around you.
- You have a bad headache that is not helped by taking pain medicine.

You have signs of a possible stroke.

- Numbness, weakness, or problems moving on one side of the body
- Trouble speaking, slurred speech, or speech that does not make sense
- A sudden very bad headache with no known cause
- You have signs of a blood clot in your lungs.
 - You have sudden trouble breathing, even when you rest.
 - You have sharp chest pain that gets worse when you cough, bend over, take a deep breath.
 - You cough up blood.

You have a seizure (body shaking, staring, eyes rolling).

You have signs of a blood clot in your leg.

- Your leg is red and swollen.
- There is swelling, warmth, and tenderness along a vein in your leg.

You have signs that something is stuck in your airway.

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have pain when you breathe.
- Your lips, nose area, or nails turn blue or gray.
- You feel like you are choking.
- You have trouble speaking.



When to Call Your Regular Doctor

Your blood sugar (glucose) is higher than it should be.

You have swallowing problems.

- You have pain when you swallow.
- You choke or cough when you swallow.
- You drool when you eat or drink.
- You find it gets harder to swallow.

You have signs of dehydration (low body fluids).

- Your urine is darker than normal.
- You urinate very little or not at all.
- You are very thirsty or have a dry sticky mouth.
- You get more tired or feel weaker.
- Your eyes look sunken, and you do not make tears.
- Your heart is beating faster than normal.

You have urinary tract or bladder problems.

- You need to urinate often and have pain when you urinate.
- Your urine is cloudy, dark, or smells bad.
- You urinate very little or not at all.
- Your bladder still feels full even after you urinate.

You are depressed and feel overwhelmed.



Learn More

- American Stroke Association. Go to: www.strokeassociation.org
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) - National Institutes of Health. Go to: www.ninds.nih.gov
- National Stroke Association. Go to: www.stroke.org
- National Institutes of Health. Go to: www.smokefree.gov

This information is general in nature and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you might have. This information sheet is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Signatures

Patient or Caregiver

Signature

Date

Nurse

Signature

Date

