



Stroke Rehabilitation Information

Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of long-term disability in the U.S. Approximately 4 million Americans are living with physical, cognitive, and emotional losses related to stroke. In addition, there are millions of family members and friends who are involved in the support and care of persons who have survived a stroke.

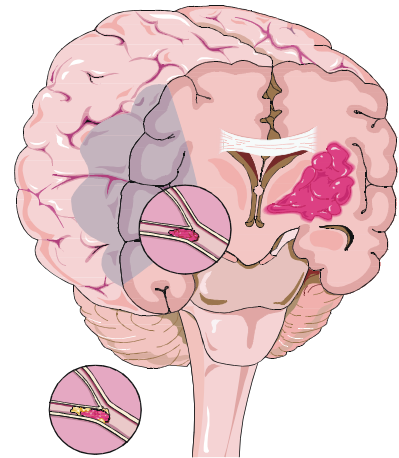
◆ Effects of Stroke

1. Immediate effects:

- Weakness (**hemiparesis**) or paralysis (**hemiplegia**) on one side of the body. Such weakness usually affects the face, arm, and leg on one side. Because of crossed anatomical pathways, weakness occurs on the side of the body opposite the side of the brain affected by the stroke.
- Numbness or sensory loss on one side of the body
- Loss of vision
- Problems with balance and/or coordination
- Problems speaking (**dysarthria**) or swallowing (**dysphagia**)
- Problems using language, including having difficulty understanding speech or writing (**aphasia**)
- Problems with memory, thinking, attention or learning
- Loss of awareness of opposite side of environment (**neglect**)

2. Delayed effects:

- Stiffness (**spasticity**) of weakened muscles
- Loss of range of motion in joints (**contractures**)
- Depression
- Pain



◆ According to the National Stroke Association:

- 10% of stroke survivors recover almost completely
- 25% recover with minor impairments
- 40% experience moderate to severe impairments that require special care
- 10% require care in a nursing home or other long-term facility
- 15% die shortly after the stroke
- Approximately 14% of stroke survivors experience a second stroke in the first 5-year following a stroke.

◆ Stroke Rehabilitation can Help

The goal of rehabilitation is to improve the quality of life for individuals who have lost normal functional abilities. Rehabilitation is aimed at helping a person to reach the highest possible level of independence and productivity. Outcome following stroke depends on many factors. The greatest period of natural recovery takes place in the first 3 to 6 months after a stroke. However, the rehabilitation processes, including **adjustment**, **compensation**, and **new learning**, are **life-long processes**. Because stroke survivors often have complex rehabilitation needs, progress and recovery are unique for each person.

Provided as a courtesy by:

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Patient Education • 7601 E. Imperial Highway • Downey, CA 90242
Phone: 562-401-8211 • FAX: 562-402-6643 • Please visit us at rancho.org

◆ **The Outcome of Rehabilitation Depends on:**

- The amount and location of damage to the brain.
- Natural recovery.
- Involvement and skill of the rehabilitation team, including the patient him/herself.
- Support of family and friends. Caring family/friends can be one of the most important factors in rehabilitation.

◆ **Rehabilitation Programs are Offered in Multiple Settings**

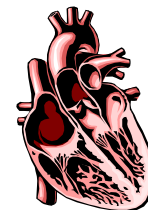
The choice of setting depends upon multiple considerations, including patient preference, prognosis, endurance, motivation, goals, needs, medical condition, and health insurance policy. You can find rehabilitation program in the following settings:

- Acute hospital
- Free-standing rehabilitation hospital (requires provision of 3 hours intensive rehabilitation therapy every day)
- Subacute facility
- Skilled nursing facility
- Outpatient programs
- Home-based programs

◆ **Risks of Another Stroke**

People who have had a stroke are at an increased risk of having another one, especially during the first year following the original stroke. The following factors increase the risk of having another stroke:

- High blood pressure (**hypertension**)
- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes
- Transient ischemic attack (**TIA**)
- Heart disease
- Older age
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle



Although some risk factors for stroke cannot be changed (e.g. age), others such as high blood pressure and smoking can be altered. Patients and families should seek guidance from their physician, therapists, and nurses about lifestyle changes to help prevent another stroke. Rehabilitation programs are a good place to start. Family and friends can be excellent support and help to promote the changes.

Information is adapted from the Stroke Rehabilitation Information (reviewed 6-28-2000) by National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, National Institute of Health.

Disclaimer: This information is for health educational purposes only. If you have questions, you should ask your doctor, nurse, or other persons who you see for your health care needs. Each clinician caring for the patient is responsible to determine the most appropriate care.

Provided as a courtesy by:

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Patient Education • 7601 E. Imperial Highway • Downey, CA 90242
Phone: 562-401-8211 • FAX: 562-402-6643 • Please visit us at rancho.org

ESD0002StrokeRehabInfo.WPD 1/30/03