

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 to move home or perhaps to another setting that can better meet your needs.



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 to take medication as prescribed and follow medical advice.
- 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 in your bathroom or other areas.
- 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 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 permanently or temporarily. It's important that the living place you choose is safe and supports your continued recovery. Your social worker and 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.
- For more information about stroke, or to get more 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*, a free magazine for stroke survivors and caregivers.

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 caregiver or stroke support group available in my community?

Is a different option possible later?

