

YOUR STROKE RECOVERY

A GUIDE FOR LIFE AFTER
EXPERIENCING A STROKE



STROKE  RECOVERY
ASSOCIATION
OF MANITOBA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the members of the Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba's Support Groups that we had the pleasure to meet with prior to development of this resource.

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us to allow us to create a resource that could be found useful for stroke survivors, their families, and their carers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STROKE	<i>PAGE 4</i>
STROKE & THE BRAIN	<i>PAGE 6</i>
WHAT TO EXPECT	<i>PAGE 8</i>
STROKE PREVENTION	<i>PAGE 14</i>
STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA	<i>PAGE 16</i>
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE	<i>PAGE 20</i>
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	<i>PAGE 21</i>
REFERENCES	<i>PAGE 26</i>

STROKE

WHAT IS A STROKE

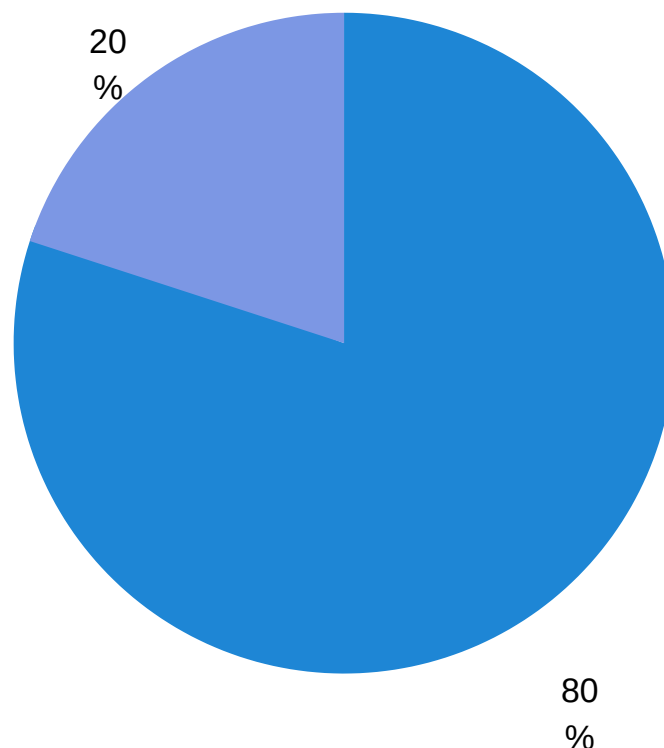
The brain receives oxygen and nutrients through a network of blood vessels. When damage occurs to these vessels, and not enough blood is able to get to the brain, either due to a blockage or burst, the brain is damaged, and the cells within it begin to die. Damage and death of brain cells can lead to long-term or permanent physical and cognitive impairments.

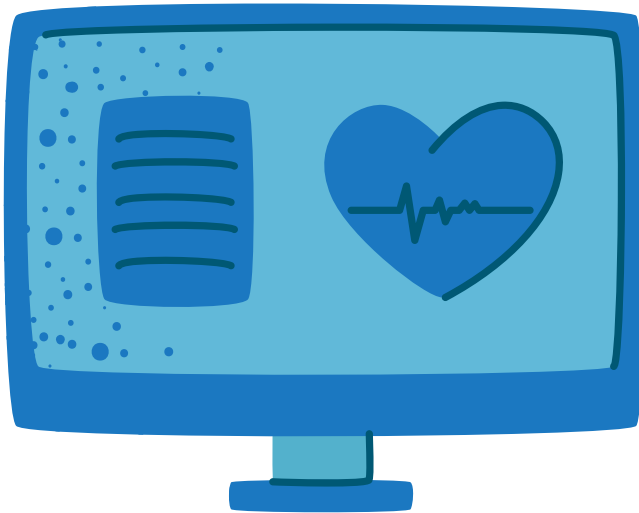
TYPES OF STROKE

Strokes are generally split into two categories: **Ischemic** and **Hemorrhagic**

Ischemic strokes occur in about 80% of stroke cases

Hemorrhagic strokes occur in about 20% of stroke cases





ISCHEMIC

Caused by a blood clot

3 Types

- **Thrombotic**
 - Blockage due to narrowing of vessels
- **Embolic**
 - A blood clot from somewhere else in the body that has travelled to the brain
- **Systemic Hyperfusion**
 - Overall circulatory system issue
 - Not enough blood is flowing to the brain

HEMORRHAGIC

Caused by the rupture of a blood vessel

2 Types

- **Intracerebral**
 - Bleeding directly into the brain
 - Commonly caused by hypertension
- **Subarachnoid**
 - Bleeding into cerebrospinal fluid, putting pressure on the brain

STROKE & THE BRAIN

Different areas of the brain are responsible for different functions.

You might have a different experience than someone else who survived a stroke due to the location of where the stroke occurred, and how big the area is.



LEFT VS RIGHT

The brain is divided in half. Damage to one side of the brain will affect the opposite side of the body than where it occurred.

If your stroke occurred on the left side of the brain, you may experience difficulties with:

- Control of the right side of your body
- Understanding language
- Speaking
- Emotions
- Logic
- Sequencing

If your stroke occurred on the right side of the brain, you may experience difficulties with:

- Control of the left side of your body
- Visual perception
- Visual memory
- Awareness
- Creativity

FRONTAL LOBE

A stroke that occurs in your **frontal lobe** may result in changes in:

- Attention
- Concentration
- Organization
- Speaking
- Planning
- Judgement

TEMPORAL LOBE

A stroke that occurs in your **temporal lobes** may result in changes in:

- Memory
- Understanding language
- Hearing
- Organization

PARIETAL LOBE

A stroke that occurs in your **parietal lobes** may result in changes in:

- Sense of touch
- Depth perception
- Identification of sizes, shapes, and colours
- Visual perception

OCCIPITAL LOBE

A stroke that occurs in your **occipital lobes** may result in changes to your vision

CEREBELLUM

A stroke that occurs in your **cerebellum** may result in changes in:

- Balance
- Coordination
- Motor activity
- Visual perception

WHAT TO EXPECT

A stroke can impact the way you live your life in several different ways. You may not experience all of the described changes, but you may experience some.

COMMUNICATION

Communication problems are very common after a stroke.

You may:

- Have difficulty understanding what others are saying
- Be unable to find the right words to express yourself
- Repeat yourself without realizing
- Have difficulty with reading and writing.



The term **aphasia** is often used to describe different communication issues.

Expressive aphasia is when you know what you want to say but are unable to produce the words properly. Your words may be jumbled, they may not make sense, or they may be completely different than what you were intending to say.

Receptive aphasia is when you can hear, see, and read words correctly, but are unable to recall what they mean. You may have difficulty understanding what others are saying to you, almost as if they were speaking a foreign language.

Speech language pathologists may be able to help. If you are not already connected with one, speak to your health care provider.

A stroke can create many problems with how the muscles in your body function.

After a stroke, you may experience paralysis or weakness on one side of the body. As well, muscles may also become very tight (**spastic**) or very soft (**flaccid**).

These physical changes can create many challenges in everyday life and impact your ability to be independent.

Strength, balance, and many other factors may have been impacted by your stroke which may make it difficult for you to move in the way that you did before.

Assistive devices such as a walker, wheelchair, or cane are commonly needed after a stroke to help improve independence with mobility and reduce the risk of injury.

Physiotherapists and occupational therapists can support you with regaining function and choosing assistive devices that can be helpful.



DYSPHAGIA

Dysphagia is the term used to describe difficulty with swallowing food and drink. This is common after a stroke as the muscles of your throat and mouth may be weak or you may have lost feeling in these areas.

Dysphagia puts you at a high risk for choking and inhaling food which can lead to further complications such as pneumonia.

Difficulties with food and beverage intake can also increase your risk of malnutrition and dehydration.

Dieticians, speech language pathologists, and occupational therapists can provide support with swallowing issues.

BLADDER & BOWEL

Issues with bladder and bowel control are common after a stroke as the muscles in these areas may have been weakened and/or the brain may be having trouble communicating with them.

Tasks such as walking to the bathroom and removing clothing may also be more difficult after stroke and can impact your independence with toileting.

Removing tripping hazards and installing a raised toilet seat can be easy changes you can make to your home to assist you.

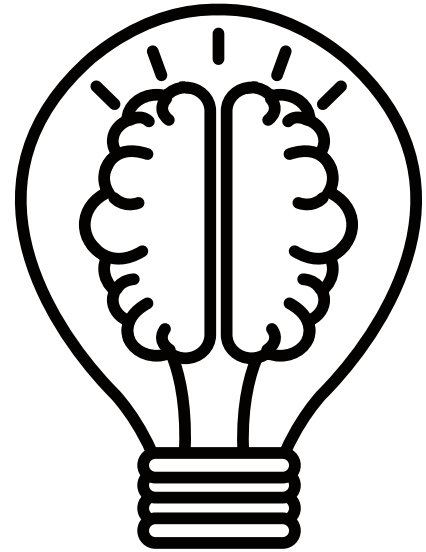
Connect with your physiotherapist, occupational therapist, nurse, or dietitian for more support.

COGNITION

Due to the nature of a stroke and its impact on the brain, you may find that you have difficulty with:

- Thinking
- Problem solving
- Completing many of the everyday tasks that you once did.

If you notice that your thinking is not like it used to be, it is important that you speak with your healthcare team so they can help you navigate and manage these cognitive changes.



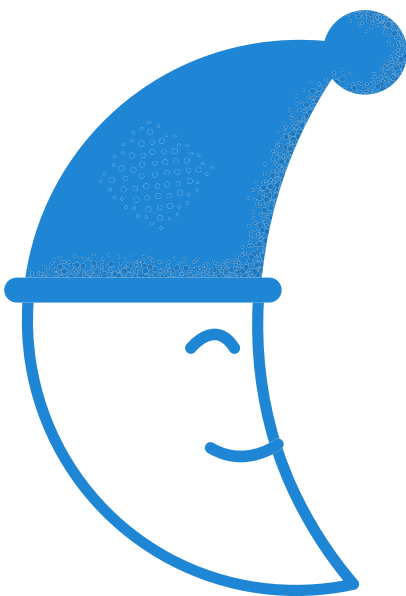
FATIGUE

After a stroke you may find that no matter how much you sleep you may still be tired, both physically and mentally.

You may feel like you have no energy and that even the smallest amount of activity is an uphill battle.

Feeling tired right after your stroke is normal, however, you may find that eventually the fatigue does not get better with rest.

Extreme tiredness can lead to depression and feelings of isolation, so it is important to talk to the members of your healthcare team if you are experiencing post-stroke fatigue.



EMOTIONS

Feeling emotional after a stroke is normal, as this is a difficult and serious health event that has impacted your way of life. However, intense, rapidly changing emotions that you have difficulty controlling may also be a result of injury to the brain during your stroke.

After a stroke you may experience:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Denial
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Frustration
- Grief
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Loneliness

You may also find that you respond to situations differently than how you intended. For example, you may laugh inappropriately or cry suddenly. This is referred to as **emotional lability** and is common post-stroke.

Your family may be experiencing some of the same emotional changes. Consider joining support groups for you and your loved ones to help you understand your emotional changes.



DEPRESSION

Sadness, grief, and a sense of loss are common after a stroke.

However, sadness that does not go away may be a sign of depression.

Other signs include:

- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in weight
- Decreased energy
- Restlessness
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Irritation
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Decreased motivation to complete tasks



Depression is common after a stroke for both survivors and their caregivers. It is important to know the signs of depression so that you may seek the help you require from a medical professional.

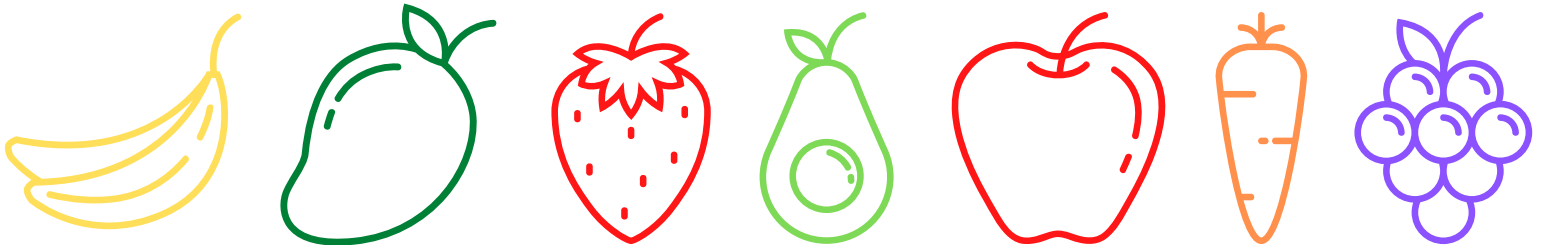
If you suspect you may have depression, discuss this with your health care provider. Consider discussing this with your loved ones and joining a support or peer group.

STROKE PREVENTION

Experiencing a stroke puts you at a higher risk of experiencing another stroke. Despite this, there are several things you can do to help prevent a stroke and live a healthy lifestyle

HEALTHY EATING

- Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your meals and snacks
- Eat foods that are high in fibre
- Decrease the amount of sodium in your meals
- Switch out unhealthy fats for healthy fats
 - For example: Omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated fats, and polyunsaturated fats are healthier than saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol
- Decrease the amount of added sugar
- Eat moderate portions
- Incorporate whole-grains
- Include fat-free or low-fat dairy products into your meals or snacks
- Limit your intake of saturated and trans fats
- Decrease the amount of red meat in your diet
- Increase the amount of skinless poultry and fish in your diet



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Being overweight increases your risk of experiencing another stroke.

Incorporating some physical activity into your daily routine can be an effective way to lower this risk.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation recommends incorporating at least 150 minutes of physical activity into your week to lower your risk of stroke by 30%, but the amount of exercise you incorporate into your daily routine will be dependent on your stage of recovery. Speak to your doctor before beginning any physical activity regimens.

Be mindful to not push yourself too hard. If you start to feel unwell or have difficulty breathing, stop, rest, and talk to your doctor.



OTHER TIPS



- Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke
- Limit your alcohol intake
- Decrease stress levels
- Remember to take your medications as directed by your health care provider
 - If you have other health conditions that can increase your risk of stroke (for example, diabetes, atrial fibrillation), remember to follow your health care provider's advice and take medications as directed

STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA



ABOUT US

The Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba is a registered charity that was founded in 1973 by a group of stroke survivors.

The Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba provides:

- Referral services to other community resources
- Information packages
- Educational materials
- Hosts seminars & guest speakers
- Operates programs in Manitoba to assist stroke survivors and their families
- Hosts both peer and caregiver support groups
- Opportunity for survivors and their families to connect with peers

You don't need to be a member of the association to participate in any of our programs or to receive information about available services

CONTACT US

Address: Unit B – 247 Provencher Blvd, Winnipeg, MB

Phone: 204-942-2880

Email: director@strokerecovery.ca

Hours:

Monday – Friday

9:00am – 3:00pm

Art Therapy Class

Incorporate a range of art medium and themes appealing to the senses, vision, and accommodating and developing hand/eye coordination ability.

Free

Monday's and Wednesday's from 10:00am – 12:00pm

Adaptive Exercise Class

With guidance from the qualified licensed therapist, participants move through a series of fluid group and individual exercises and activities designed to keep muscles and joints limber, flexible, and strong.

Free Virtual Classes

Tuesday's and Friday's from 10:00am – 10:45am

Auxiliary & Learn to Knit Program

The Auxiliary meets weekly, sorting wool donations to provide knitters with material for creating items to sell.

If you would like to learn basic knitting and crocheting, create knitting for loved ones, bring in donations of wool, enjoy coffee, creativity, and conversation, then this is the place for you!

Free

Please Call for meeting times during COVID-19

Chair Yoga Class

An exercise, stretching, and breathing class, led by a stroke survivor intended for those with limited mobility.

Free Virtual Classes

Monday's and Thursday's from 10:00am – 11:00am

Social Club

The Games Day group meets for games including Trivia Pursuit, Bingo, and Fellowship. All are welcome.

Free (suspended during COVID-19)

Thursday's from 10:00am – 12:00pm

PROGRAMS

Speakeasy Class

A speaking group for anyone who has trouble speaking their mind, telling a joke, or speaking in public; in other words, everyone!

Bring a joke if you have one handy. This is a perfect, friendly environment for anyone to practice a speech before they present it. Nothing beats speaking for making better communicators.

Free (suspended during COVID-19)

Wednesday's from 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Tai Chi Class

Tai Chi is a form of martial art that is well known for being a gentle way to combat stress. While guided through class virtually on Zoom by certified instructor Cliff, participants can expect to perform a sequence of poses of which purpose is to bring mental and physical balance, strengthening, and relaxation of tense joints and muscles.

Free

Monday's at 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Tech Support Class

Tone up your technology skills in this free technology group. Come and learn about new programs and apps. Questions are always welcome!

Free (suspended during COVID-19)

Thursday's from 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Young Stroke Survivors Group

Peer support discussion, rehabilitation assistance, caregiver support as well as the opportunity to socialize with other survivors who know what you are going through.

Free

Please Call for meeting times during COVID-19

Prime Time Support Group for Stroke Survivors

Location: Unit B - 247 Provencher Blvd (Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba Office)

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Notes: Please call Anne at 204-669-3264

In Your Prime Support Group for Stroke Survivors

Location: 845 Regent Avenue West (Access Transcona)

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Notes: Please call Anne at 204-669-3264

St. James Peer Support Group for Stroke Survivors

Location: 203 Duffield - 3rd Floor (St. James Assiniboia Senior Centre)

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Portage Stroke Survivors Support Group

Location: 40 Royal Road North, Portage la Prairie (Herman Prior Senior Centre)

Date: 3rd Tuesday of each month

Time: 2:00pm

Peer Support Group for Caregivers

Location: Unit B - 247 Provencher Blvd (Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba Office)

Date: Every second Monday on ZOOM

Time: 7:00pm

Please email: director@strokerecovery.ca if you have any questions.

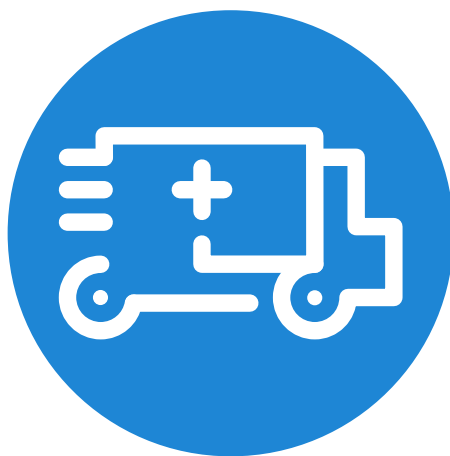
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE

Experiencing a stroke puts you at a higher risk of experiencing another stroke. Be aware of signs and symptoms so you know what to do if you experience them.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg
- Sudden confusion
- Difficulty speaking or understanding others
- Sudden difficulty with vision
- Sudden trouble walking
- Sudden dizziness
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache

If you experience these signs and symptoms, call 911 immediately
Timely medical attention can have a significant impact on your recovery



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are several resources, both online and in person that you can access. This is not an exhaustive list of resources, and none of the services below are endorsed by the Stroke Recovery Association of Manitoba.

A & O : SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

A & O: Support Services for Older Adults is a nonprofit organization that provides specialized services for older Manitobans across the province. They aim to support older Manitobans enhance their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual lives, and promote active participation.

Website: <https://www.aosupportservices.ca>

AMERICAN STROKE ASSOCIATION

Provides in-depth information and resources on strokes and effects on individual functioning.

Website: <https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke>

BEYOND STROKE

Provides information and resources regarding life after stroke.

Website: <http://www.beyondstroke.ca>

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Provides in-depth information and fact sheets on brain injury and effects on individual functioning.

Website: <https://www.biausa.org/brain-injury>

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION (CMHA)

The Canadian Mental Health Association provides resources and information about various mental health concerns.

Website: <https://cmha.ca>

DRIVER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (DAMP)

A specialized, referral-based program to help assess driving ability post-injury. Contact MPI or speak to a member of your medical team for more information.

Website: www.mpi.mb.ca/en/DL/DL/Records/Pages/drv-records.aspx

Phone: 204-985-7000

GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA: STROKE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

The Government of Manitoba has a website which provides general stroke information, as well as some resources available to those who have experienced a stroke, and their caregivers.

Website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/stroke/strokeinfo.html>

HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF CANADA

The Heart and Stroke foundation of Canada offers a variety of informational resources on stroke and life after stroke. The Heart and Stroke Foundation also provides a list of provincial and national resources and programs.

Website: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca>

HOME CARE ASSISTANCE: STROKE CARE

this is a private, for-hire company which can provide personalized post-stroke care in your own home. This program aims to improve independence through a variety of services such as scheduling medical appointments, arranging transportation to appointments, aiding in meal preparation, medication management, and helping complete prescribed exercises.

Website: <https://www.homecareassistancewinnipeg.ca/stroke-home-care/>

HOME CARE COMMUNITY STROKE CARE SERVICES

Home Care Community Stroke Care Services is a referral based home stroke program through the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. This program aims to improve independence post-stroke in the community, and help clients complete their everyday activities of daily living.

Contact your physician for a referral to these services.

INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE CENTRE (ILRC)

The Independent Living Resource Centre is an organization that promotes and supports individuals with disabilities in decision making and taking responsibility for the development and management of community resources.

Website: <https://www.ilrc.mb.ca>

LIVING WITH STROKE: EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

An educational support group for individuals after experiencing a stroke.

Contact the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba at:
204-949-2000 or Toll Free: 1-888-473-4636

PURE LIFESTYLE: NEUROLOGICAL REHABILITATION

Pure Lifestyle in Winnipeg offers individual rehabilitation for clients with neurological conditions. This includes shoulder injury prevention, fitness, integration into activity, and post-stroke rehabilitation.

Website: <http://www.purewinnipeg.com/physiotherapy/neurological-rehabilitation/>

RIVERVIEW HEALTH CENTRE NEUROLOGY REHABILITATION STROKE PROGRAM

The Riverview Rehabilitation Stroke Program provides rehabilitative care for adults with neurological impairments that resulted from strokes. The program typically is 6–8 weeks long, and requires referral from a physician.

Website: <https://www.rhc.mb.ca/index.php/areas-of-specialized-care/stroke-program>

STROKE ENGINE

Stroke Engine provides information about current evidence-based practices and recommendations in stroke care.

Website: <https://www.strokengine.ca/en/>

WELLNESS INSTITUTE: NEUROFIT PROGRAM

A specialized 8-week exercise program, tailored to those who have had a neurological event, such as a stroke. This program focuses on strength, stretching, and endurance exercises to help improve individual fitness post-injury.

Website: <https://wellnessinstitute.ca/stroke-neurofit/>

REFERENCES

American College of Cardiology. (n.d.). Healthy Eating: Heart-Healthy Fats. [PDF].

Retrieved from:

<https://www.cardiosmart.org/~ /media/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/en/abk6292.ashx>

American Stroke Association (n.d.) Exercise Recommendations After [Webpage].

Retrieved from: <https://www.stroke.org/en/professionals/stroke-resource-library/post-stroke-care/patient-focused-rehab-resources/exercise-recommendations-after-stroke>

American Stroke Association (n.d.). Life After Stroke: Our Path Forward. [PDF]. Retrieved

from: https://www.stroke.org/-/media/stroke-files/life-after-stroke/life-after-stroke-guide_7819.pdf?la=en

American Stroke Association (n.d.). What As A Stroke [Webpage]. Retrieved from:

https://www.stroke.org/-/media/stroke-files/stroke-resource-center/explaining_stroke_brochure_6_25_19.pdf?la=en

Brain Injury Association of America (n.d.). Fact Sheets [Webpage]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.biausa.org/brain-injury/about-brain-injury/basics/function-of-the-brain>

Caplan, L. R. (2019). Clinical diagnosis of stroke. [Webpage]. Retrieved from UpToDate:

[https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/clinical-diagnosis-of-stroke-subtypes?](https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/clinical-diagnosis-of-stroke-subtypes?search=classification%20of%20stroke&source=search_result&selectedTitle=2~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=2)

[search=classification%20of%20stroke&source=search_result&selectedTitle=2~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=2](https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/clinical-diagnosis-of-stroke-subtypes?search=classification%20of%20stroke&source=search_result&selectedTitle=2~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=2)

Caplan, L. R. (2020). Etiology, classification, and epidemiology of stroke. [Webpage].

Retrieved from UpToDate: [https://www-uptodate-](https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/etiology-classification-and-epidemiology-of-stroke?search=stroke%20classification&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1)

[com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/etiology-classification-and-epidemiology-of-stroke?search=stroke%20classification&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1](https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/etiology-classification-and-epidemiology-of-stroke?search=stroke%20classification&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1)

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. (2017). Different Strokes: Recovery triumphs and challenges at any age: 2017 stroke report. [PDF]. Retrieved from: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/stroke-report/strokereport2017en.ashx?la=en&hash=28816B65756BCB0B4151C30D2EA0237EEE6CF1F9>

Heart & Stroke Foundation (n.d.) Your Stroke Journey: A guide for people living with stroke. [PDF]. Retrieved from: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/your-stroke-journey/en-your-stroke-journey-v20.ashx>

Liebeskind, D. S. (2019). Hemorrhagic stroke. [Webpage]. Retrieved from MedScape: <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1916662-overview>

Majid, A., & Mouzner, K. (2019). Pathophysiology of ischemic stroke. [Webpage]. Retrieved from UpToDate: https://www-uptodate-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/contents/pathophysiology-of-ischemic-stroke?search=ischemic%20stroke&source=search_result&selectedTitle=3~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=3

Participaction (n.d.). Benefits & Guidelines: Adults: Ages 18 to 64 [Webpage]. Retrieved from: <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/benefits-and-guidelines/adults-18-to-64>

Reed, K. L. (2014). Stroke-Adult. In K. Reed (Ed.), Quick reference to occupational therapy (pp. 365-374). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.



DISCLAIMER:

THIS DOCUMENT WAS DEVELOPED BY ONE OR MORE STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S RADY FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE HELPFUL INFORMATION AND IS NOT INTENDED TO REPLACE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE OF A PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER. THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES OF COMPLETENESS OR ACCURACY WITH REGARD TO THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT. ALL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THIS DOCUMENT DISCLAIM ANY LIABILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE OF THIS DOCUMENT AND OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN. THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND.