



with a

Stroke

Stroke Self Care Pack



Name _____

(The name you prefer
to be known as) _____

Date of Birth _____

Emergency Contact/
Carer's Details _____

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WHAT IS SELF CARE?



Self Care is about looking after yourself; living a healthy lifestyle and looking at what you can do and want to do.

Rather than what you can't do.



It is also about taking responsibility for your own health and wellbeing with the support of the people involved in your care.



This could be brushing your teeth regularly, taking medicine when you have a cold, or doing some exercise. It is really important to help to keep yourself as well as possible.



LEARNING TO MANAGE YOUR CONDITION



If you have a long term condition, there are extra things you may need to consider, such as making changes to your diet, different types of exercise or different types of medication you may need to take.

When you talk to your doctor, nurse or social care provider about your condition, you may want to discuss some of the things you need to do to stay well.



Some of these will be things that you do yourself, such as eating healthily, exercising, or taking your medicines at the right time.

By being in control of your health, you can help improve your quality of life.

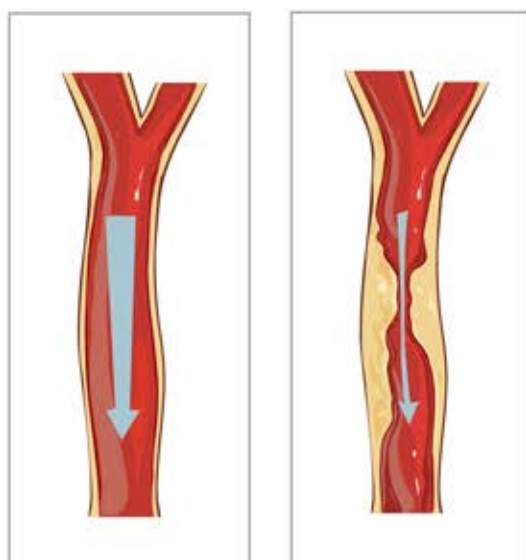
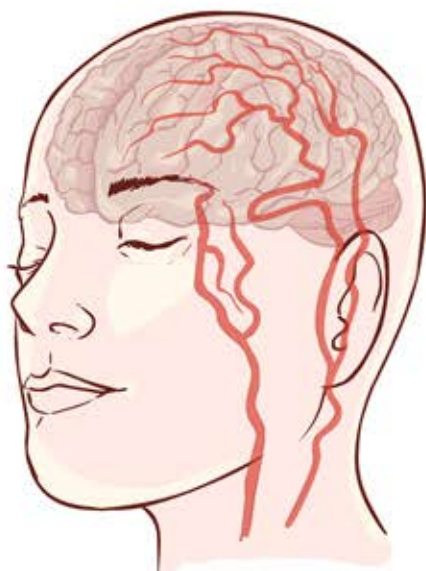
WHAT IS A STROKE?

Your brain needs blood to make it work. The blood flows into your brain through small blood vessels and brings the oxygen your brain needs.



If one of those vessels gets blocked, part of your brain won't get any oxygen.

Or if one of those blood vessels bursts open, part of your brain won't get any oxygen.



Without blood your brain cells can be damaged or stop working.

The quicker a person receives treatment for a stroke, the less damage is likely to happen.

SIGNS OF A STROKE

F Your FACE droops to one side.

A You might not be able to lift one of your ARMS.

S You might not be able to SPEAK or your speech sounds slurred.

T If you have any of these symptoms, it's TIME to call 999 FAST.



Sometimes the effects of a stroke will last only a few minutes. This is called a mini-stroke or Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA). The symptoms can last for up to 24 hours.

If you think you have had a mini-stroke, it is very important to go to A&E as soon as possible. This may be a warning sign for having a major stroke. You will have a follow-up review with the stroke consultant six weeks after your TIA.

If the symptoms have fully recovered you should contact your doctor's surgery. An appointment will be made for you to go to the stroke clinic with a couple of days, with a follow up review with the stroke consultant four weeks later.

LIVING WITH A STROKE

People recover from strokes in different ways. Some people will make a good recovery however not everyone will get better.



You might get other health problems, such as a chest infection, that will slow down your recovery.

If you have a really bad stroke then you might have a long-term impairment. It can effect any part of you that your brain controls; such as your speech, movement, understanding of things or memory.



Having a stroke will change your life. There will be a team of people who will work with you to support and help you adapt to your new way of life. They will try to help you relearn old skills and find ways of managing any new or long-term difficulties.

PEOPLE WHO WILL HELP WITH YOUR RECOVERY

Occupational Therapist

After having a stroke you will probably need help to relearn how to do everyday tasks, cope with any long-term impairments and learn new skills. An occupational therapist will work with you and support you in carrying out these tasks.



They will work with you to decide your goals that can help you get back, keep and improve your independence. This might be done by making changes to your home; using new equipment or different methods.

Physiotherapist

Physiotherapy will normally begin as soon as your medical condition has stabilised. The physiotherapist will assess the extent of any physical impairment before drawing up a treatment plan.

You will have short sessions of physiotherapy that last a few minutes. The sessions will then increase in duration as you start to regain muscle strength and control. The physiotherapist will work with you by setting goals depending on your condition. These may vary from picking up an object to standing or walking.

Physiotherapy sessions may continue after you have been discharged from hospital.



Speech and Language Therapist

After having a stroke, you may experience problems with speaking and understanding, as well as with reading and writing. You should see a speech and language therapist as soon as possible for an assessment, and to start therapy to help you with communication skills.

Many people have difficulty swallowing after they have had their stroke. If you do have swallowing problems, they will get better. Your Speech and Language Therapist will work with you and look at ways to help ease the difficulties. This may include changing your diet; making fluids thicker so they are easier to swallow, eating softer food such as mashed potato or changing the temperature of what you eat or drink.



Optician

A stroke can sometimes damage the parts of the brain that receive, process and understand information sent by the eyes. If you have any problems with your vision after a stroke, you should go and see an optician who will check your vision and suggest possible treatments.

Social Worker

When you're ready to be discharged from hospital a Social Worker will look at what services you need to support you. They will look at your current living situation and if needed they can signpost to other agencies such as Safe and Sound, Housing Options, Fire Service etc. They will also arrange residential care if you previously lived on your own.

A Social Worker will also assess the needs of carers to ensure that they are supported in providing care and support, in circumstances that are often challenging and can cause upset.

HELPING TO PREVENT A STROKE

There are some things you can do to lower your chances of having a stroke or having another one in the future. You can do this by making changes to your lifestyle, such as:

Managing other health conditions

Some health conditions make it more likely that you will have a stroke. High cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes are some of the conditions that give you a greater risk of having a stroke.

It is important that you take any medication you are prescribed and attend any appointments or check-ups.

When you have had a stroke you will be included on the Stroke Risk Register at your doctor's surgery. This will provide ongoing monitoring of your condition and you will have a health review at least once a year.

Blood Pressure

It is very important that you control your blood pressure. Try to find out what your blood pressure was when you had your stroke. The ideal blood pressure reading is 130/80mmHg. However the lower your reading is, the better it is for your health.

Exercise, avoiding cigarette smoke, not drinking too much alcohol and having a healthy diet are all ways you can help to keep your blood pressure under control.

If you have tried lifestyle measures but your blood pressure remains high then your doctor may want you to take medication. If you have any side effects from the medication you are taking, talk to your doctor about an alternative. Do not just stop taking the medication.



Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a type of fat that is carried round your body in your blood. Keeping a low cholesterol level can reduce the risk of having a stroke. If you have a cholesterol level of 3.5 or above you will be prescribed a statin. There are many different types of statin; if you have any side effects from the one you are taking, talk to your doctor about an alternative. Do not just stop taking the medication.



Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition caused by too much sugar in your blood. High levels of glucose in your blood can cause your blood vessels to become clogged up, therefore increasing the risk of you having a stroke.

Exercise, avoiding cigarette smoke, not drinking too much alcohol and having a healthy diet are all ways you can help to reduce the risk of having diabetes or keeping the symptoms under control.



Medication

Your doctor will probably prescribe several medicines after you have had a stroke. Medicines to prevent blood clots forming are typically used, because blood clots can cause TIAs and strokes. The types of medicines that prevent clotting are:

- Anticoagulant medicines
- Antiplatelet medicines

Cholesterol-lowering and blood-pressure-lowering medicines are also used to prevent TIAs and strokes. Anticoagulant medicines such as warfarin, apixaban, dabigatran and rivaroxaban help to stop blood clots from forming. If you have atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat), or another condition that makes you more likely to have another stroke, then you may need to take this type of medicine.

Antiplatelet medicines help prevent platelets in the blood from sticking together as easily: therefore reducing the risk of blood clots forming. You may be prescribed;

- Clopidogrel which is commonly used to prevent strokes
- Aspirin with dipyridamole is an alternative
- Aspirin alone is less commonly used as clopidogrel is usually recommended as first line treatment for preventing strokes

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medication. Talk to your community pharmacist about any side effects you may be experiencing.

If you think your medicines are making you feel unwell check with your community pharmacist if the medicine is likely to be the cause. It can be dangerous if you suddenly stop your medication but under some circumstances it would be important to stop suddenly. Check with your community pharmacist or doctor when you should stop a medicine.

If you plan to take any new medication (including medicines from a pharmacy or supermarket or herbal remedies) ask your community pharmacist first. Stopping and starting other medicines may affect your stroke medication, particularly if you are taking an anticoagulant.

For further information, visit:

NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Atrial Fibrillation Association at www.atrialfibrillation.org.uk

Eating a healthy, balanced diet

Having a poor diet makes it more likely that you will have a stroke. Eating foods that are high in fat can increase the risk of blocked arteries, being overweight and having high blood pressure.

Foods that are low in fat and high in fibre are best. Try to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, five a day if you can. Whole grains such as wholemeal bread, brown rice and pasta and wholewheat breakfast cereals are good for you too.

Have fish twice a week. One of these should be oily fish, such as salmon sardines, fresh tuna or pilchards. If you don't like oily fish you might want to take a fish oil supplement instead.

Ensuring a balance in your diet is important. Don't eat too much of any single food – particularly foods that are high in salt and processed foods.

You should limit the amount of salt you eat to no more than 6g (0.2oz) a day because too much salt will increase your blood pressure. Six grams of salt is about one teaspoonful. Check food labels to see how much salt is in the food you are buying. It's not just the amount you put on your food or use when cooking.



For more information contact:
Manningham Healthy Living
Initiative (MHLI)
Telephone: 01274 223222

Café West Healthy Living Centre
Telephone: 01274 488499

HALE Healthy Living Project
Telephone: 01274 271088



Get lots of exercise

Combining a healthy diet with regular exercise is the best way to maintain a healthy weight, and regular exercise can also help lower your cholesterol level and keep your blood pressure at a healthy level.

Try to do 30 minutes every day; this can be housework, gardening or walking to the shops. Doing some cardiovascular exercise – something that gets you warm and slightly out of breath – is important too.

If you have had, or are recovering from, a stroke speak to your doctor, or physiotherapist, about what is the best exercise for you to do.

For more information, contact:
Bradford Trident Healthy Lifestyles
Project
Telephone: 01274 768066

Champions Show The Way –
Healthy Living and Weight
Management.
Telephone: 01274 321911



Try to avoid cigarette smoke

You can considerably lower the risk of having a stroke if you stop smoking. This is because smoking narrows your arteries and makes your blood more likely to clot.

It will also improve your health and make you less likely to have other serious illnesses such as lung cancer and heart disease.

The NHS Smoking Helpline can offer advice and encouragement to help you quit smoking. You can telephone on 0300 123 1044, or visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree

Don't drink too much alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol can lead to high blood pressure and trigger atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat), both of which can increase your risk of having a stroke.

Because alcoholic drinks are high in calories too they also cause weight gain. You are 3 times more likely to have a stroke if you drink heavily.

If you do drink alcohol, you should try not to drink more than the advised limits. It is recommended that men and women do not regularly drink more than 14 units a week.

For example, one unit of alcohol is about the same as:

- Half a pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider
- A small pub measure of spirits
- A standard pub measure of fortified wine such as port or sherry



There are one and a half units of alcohol in:

- A small glass of ordinary strength wine
- A standard pub measure of spirits.

Try to have a couple of alcohol-free days a week to let your liver recover. Spread your drinking over three days or more if you drink as much as 14 units a week.

If you have not fully recovered from your stroke, you may find that you will have become particularly sensitive to alcohol and even the recommended safe limits as above for the general population may be too much for you. Alcohol may also effect any medication you are taking.

For more information and advice about alcohol visit <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx> or talk to your GP.

For more information contact:
The Bridge Project. Telephone: 01274 723863 or visit www.thebridgeproject.org.uk

Project 6. Telephone: 01535 610180 or visit www.project6.org.uk

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



Having a stroke can have a huge impact on your life and that of your family.

Every stroke is different. Everyone's recovery is different. There is life after having a stroke but it may be different to how your life was before.

With the right support and help, your stroke doesn't have to stop you from doing anything that you want to do. It is important to keep setting goals and challenges: acknowledge that you might not reach them immediately but every little bit helps.

After a stroke people frequently experience changes in their behaviour and emotions. The effects of a stroke may make a person forgetful, tired, irritable or confused. Stroke survivors may also have feelings of anger, anxiety or depression.

It is important that you recognise these feelings are normal but that you find ways in which you can manage them. Otherwise these emotions may become difficult to deal with and lead to more problems.

Talk to your doctor if these problems are severe or last a long time. They can refer you to a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist.

For some people, medicines and psychological therapies such as counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can help. CBT is a therapy that aims to change the way you think about things to produce a more positive state of mind.

Joining a support group is a good way to share experiences, coping methods and tips for recovering with other people who have been affected by a stroke

Taking part in a daily or recreational activity can give you a sense of focus; a purpose to get up and do something. Use this as an opportunity to learn new skills or take up a new hobby such as:

- Arts & crafts – painting, drawing or pottery
- Puzzles & games – board games, crosswords or computer games
- Days out – museums, art galleries or places of interest



You may feel extremely tired during your recovery – this is common. Your body is adjusting to a different way of doing even the simple things, such as walking or talking: therefore it needs more energy. Over time this should improve as you manage the balance between activity and rest.

Every day is different and what may have seemed easy the day before could prove challenging today. Know your limits and don't push yourself; finish the day on a positive note.

For more information, contact:

South West Bradford Stroke Group,
Margaret Coppack
Telephone: 01274 412174

Bradford Speakability Group,
Roy Fish
Telephone: 01274 481326

Ilkley Stroke Group,
Mrs J Lawrence
Telephone: 01943 601459

Artworks Creative Communities:
Creative Stroke Recovery Group
Telephone: 01274 256919
or visit the website at:
www.artworkscreative.org.uk

Shipley Stroke Group,
Mick Speed
Telephone: 01274 772796

SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

A stroke changes everybody's lives; not just the person who has had the stroke. If you are a friend or family member of someone who has had a stroke, you may become their carer.

This can be hard work; mentally, physically and emotionally. You may feel overwhelmed and that your own needs are being ignored. But you don't have to do it all on your own, there is help and support available.



Don't be afraid to ask

In the early days there are lots of changes to come to terms with and adapt to. However, don't be afraid to ask the stroke team questions. You will feel more in control if you know what is going on and positive about

Get a carer's assessment

As a carer, you have a right to a free assessment of your needs and to support. The kind of help and support you can get might be respite care to give yourself a break, information on local support groups or equipment to help you.

Also ask about financial support as you may be able to get benefits if you are caring for someone.



For more information, contact:

Adult and Community Services (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council)

Telephone: 01274 435400 or visit the website at:

http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/health_well-being_and_care/adult_care

North Yorkshire County Council

Telephone: 01609 534527 or visit the website at:

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/23565/Carers>

Look after yourself

Caring for someone can have big effect on your own emotional and physical health; it is important that you take time for yourself.

Take regular breaks; talk to your social worker about respite care or a sitting service; or ask a friend or family member if they can help out so that you can still take part in the activities you enjoy.

Talk to your doctor; tell them that you are a carer. They may be able to offer you free health checks, as well as free annual flu jabs. Your doctor may discuss ways of managing your own health if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to get to the surgery. Things such as home visits, repeat prescriptions delivered to a local pharmacy or appointments for you and the person you are caring for at the same time.

Try to stay healthy; eat well, exercise and get a good night's sleep. Eating a healthy, balanced diet will help to keep you well, give you the energy you need and boost your general wellbeing. Exercise is a great mood booster – even a short walk in the fresh air can make you feel uplifted. Try and get a good night's sleep, it will leave you feeling more alert and prepared for the day ahead. If you are having difficulty getting to or staying asleep, talk to your doctor.

Your emotional health is important too. If you are struggling to cope or feel alone or depressed, talk to someone. Try not to give up any activities or social groups you previously enjoyed. It's important to have time to yourself and keep your own interests.



There's support out there

Don't feel that you have to do this all on your own; caring can be a lot to deal with. There is plenty of support out there to help you cope.

Local support groups and carers' organisations have experienced, understanding staff who you can talk to. They can offer information on any part of your caring role, or direct you to another organisation that can help or support you or the person you care for.



For more information, contact:

Carers' Resource (Bradford). Telephone: 01274 449660

Carers' Resource (Skipton). Telephone: 01756 700888

info@carersresource.org

www.carersresource.org

Remember, you are doing an amazing job

Caring for a friend or family member can be rewarding and worthwhile. However, there may be times when you may feel like your efforts are not being appreciated or that no one else realises just how much you do. If you feel it's getting too much, ask for help – you're not alone.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

NHS Choices

Information on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy living.

Visit www.nhs.uk

Gov.uk

Provides information on public services such as benefits, jobs, pensions and health services.

Visit www.gov.uk

Stroke Association

UK-wide charity concerned with combating stroke in people of all ages.

Telephone: 0303 3033 100 or visit www.stroke.org.uk

Different Strokes

Support for younger stroke survivors.

Telephone: 01908 317618 or visit www.differentstrokes.co.uk

AF Association

Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA) is a UK registered charity which focuses on raising awareness of atrial fibrillation (AF).

Telephone: 01789 867502 or visit www.atrialfibrillation.org.uk

Age UK (Bradford & District)

Help, information and advice to help older people love later life.

Telephone: 01274 391190 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/bradfordandddistrict

Headway Bradford

Offer support and self-help to those whose lives have been affected by brain injury.

Telephone: 07856 076866 or visit www.headwaybradford.org.uk/

Change4life

Healthy eating tips and recipes, and fun ways to exercise.

www.nhs.uk/change4life

Carers UK

Providing carers with information, advice and support.

Telephone: 0808 808 7777



*Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford City Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford Districts Clinical Commissioning Group*



City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



Based on the RNIB Living Well with Diabetes Folder developed by Elaine Appelbee in collaboration with local communities and health service providers.

The wording in this publication can be made available in audio, large print or Braille. Please call 01274 437963.

The Self Care and Prevention Programme is committed to working in collaboration across Bradford CBMDC, Bradford City CCG, Bradford District CCG and Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCG.

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MY NOTES