

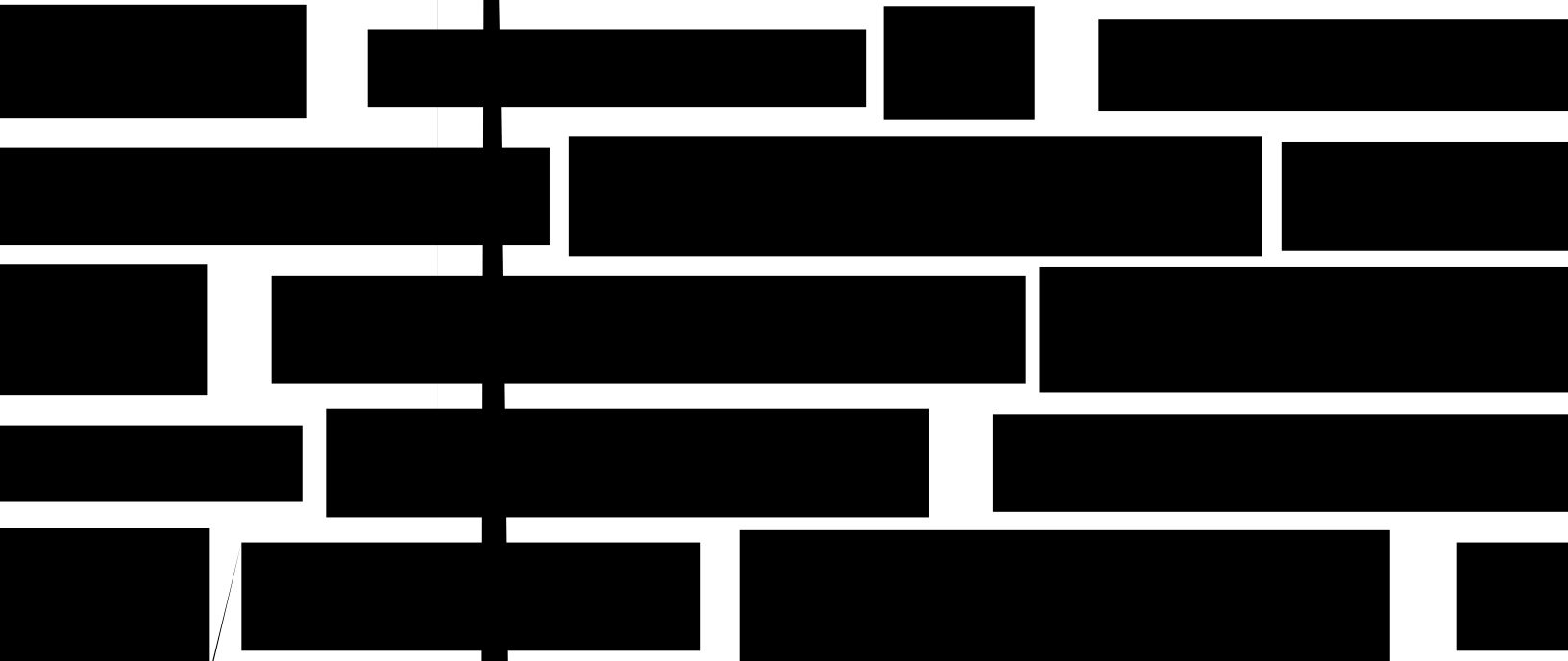
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Shock, helplessness, and worry are common among stroke survivors and their loved ones. Right after a stroke, it's not unusual to feel overwhelmed, uncertain and even fearful about your new role as a caregiver — perhaps because of severe physical limitations or personality changes in your loved one. You might also worry about another stroke and that it's your duty to help prevent it.

Your relationship with your loved one has also been altered. Besides your previous responsibilities, you may have to take on more household chores and other tasks that your loved one handled.

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the emotional care and support you need from your community, family and friends.

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By increasing your knowledge about what a stroke is and what to expect, you can feel more in control and less overwhelmed.

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- Do your research. Stroke can be beatable and rehabilitation is key to achieving victories along the way to recovery. During this journey, you will have to make a lot of decisions and serve as an advocate for your loved one. Visit [Stroke.org/Recovery](https://www.stroke.org/recovery).
- Visit the [Life After Stroke](https://www.stroke.org/life-after-stroke) section of [Stroke.org](https://www.stroke.org) to read or download our complementary resources for answers to your questions. It's important to learn the signs and symptoms of a stroke in case another one occurs (see [Stroke.org/WarningSigns](https://www.stroke.org/warning-signs)).
- Learn the [effects of stroke](https://www.stroke.org/effects-of-stroke). Every stroke is unique and understanding the effects of your loved one's stroke, will help to ask the right questions of their health care team.

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with our trained specialists who can provide helpful information, connect you to local services
or just be a listening ear. You can also request a packet of information be mailed to you
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- Reach out to family and friends. Tell them what you are experiencing. Visits, phone

- Join a support group. Use our [Stroke Support Group Finder](#) to find a group near you. Visit [Stroke.org/SupportGroups](#) for more information.
- Help organize a stroke support group or strengthen an existing one in your community. Visit [Stroke.org](#) and learn more about starting a support group.

- Consider seeking professional help. Mental health professionals and pastoral counselors can listen to your questions and concerns while teaching you coping skills.

What Is a Caregiver?

Providing care for a stroke survivor can be rewarding. But it can be stressful and frustrating when you're suddenly thrust into the caregiver role.

Caregiving is a tough job. In fact, it's among life's most challenging roles. There's often little rest and little time to prepare.

If you've just become a caregiver, keep this in mind: To succeed, you must take care of your needs as well as the survivor's.

Responsibilities such as grocery shopping, meals, doctor visits, yard work, etc.

Other responsibilities include:

- Prioritize your time. You may have other roles and responsibilities outside of being a caregiver such as being a parent, employee, or community leader. It's important to JcarVasN rc €aL IA^AaJN Scn {csnoN^S AaL {csn SA^V^ {™
- Consider seeking professional health care services. If you can't care for the stroke survivor or would like help, visit [AARP's Care Provider Locator](#). If you're considering ^caT®rNn` JAnNš soN 0-,o [Long-Term Care Calculator](#) to estimate costs.
- Seek respite care.

- For resources in your area, visit [eldercare.acl.gov](#) or the National Respite Care Locator at [archrespite.org](#).

How Can I Stay Healthy?

- Eat a balanced diet. Learn how you can maintain [good eating habits](#) and help prevent stroke and heart disease.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Find time to enjoy at least one hobby once a week.
- Spend time with your family and friends.
- Start a journal. Journaling can help you relieve stress, organize your thoughts and spend time by yourself.

Additional Resources

- [7 Practical Tips for Self-care](#)
- [Top 10 Caregiver Tips For Staying Healthy and Active](#)
- [Family Caregiver Alliance](#)
- [National Alliance for Caregiving](#)

Communicating with the health care team can help you understand what happened during your loved one's stroke, what to expect during the recovery process and how to support recovery. This can help you feel less stressed and overwhelmed.





Rehabilitation is critical to many stroke survivors' recovery. The greatest percentage of years — particularly if survivors keep working on the areas they want to improve. But

Rehabilitation can help improve stroke survivors' independence in many areas, the stroke survivor's needs.

Caregivers play an essential role in stroke survivors' rehabilitation. Caregivers should ask the health care team about rehabilitation services right away to ensure your loved one is on the road to recovery as soon as possible. Then you can talk to the health care and rehabilitation team about how you can help with rehabilitation at home and otherwise assist with your loved one's individualized recovery plan.

Rehabilitation services may include:

- Rehabilitation nursing
- Physical therapy
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- Speech, language, cognitive and/or hearing therapy
- Recreational therapy
- Nutritional care
- Rehabilitation counseling
- Social work
- Psychiatric or psychological treatment (for example, for post stroke depression)
- Chaplaincy
- Patient/family education
- Support groups
- Vocational evaluation
- Driver's training
- Programs to improve physical and emotional stamina to return to work

Rehabilitation is an important step during a stroke survivor's road to recovery. Review our post stroke exercise videos with your health care team to help restore strength and control. Learn more at [Stroke.org/PostStrokeExercise](https://www.stroke.org/poststrokeexercise).

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In the event of an emergency, be prepared to provide health care professionals with necessary information and documents. Store them in a safe location, such as a nightstand, and tell your family members and/or friends where they are located. Download a complete list of emergency documents at [caregiverstress.com](https://www.caregiverstress.com).

- List ourn to work



- [Communicating With Health Care Professionals](#)
- [Rehab Expectations](#)
- [Stroke Treatment](#)

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Stroke recovery varies from person to person and is nearly impossible to predict. But understanding what happens during recovery can help you be prepared. The effects of a stroke and how long they'll last may depend on several factors. This includes the location and size of the brain injury, the quality and quantity of medical and rehabilitative care received, the strength of one's support circle and the survivor's will to get better.

Some stroke effects are common regardless of which side of the brain the injury occurs. They include:

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- Depression
- Anxiety
- Memory loss

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- Pseudobulbar affect (crying or laughing at unexpected, sometimes inappropriate times)
- Dementia

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- Fatigue
- Dysphagia (swallowing problems)
- Shoulder pain (on the affected/ recovering side of the body)
- Central pain syndrome (unexplainable pain, temperature sensitivity, sensitivity to light and touch)

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- Vision problems
- Balance issues
- Claw toe and hammertoe
- Foot drop
- Seizures
- Spasticity (tightening of muscles in the affected limb)



Some common effects of a stroke are most often associated with an injury to either the left or right hemisphere of the brain.

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Injury on the left side of the brain may cause:

- Paralysis on the right side of the body
- Aphasia, a language impairment that inhibits the ability to use or comprehend words
 - [Learn About the Types of Aphasia](#)
 - [How Technology Helps People With Aphasia](#)

movement patterns needed to produce speech when there is no paralysis or weakness of speech muscles

– [Aphasia vs. Apraxia](#)

- Slow, cautious behaviors

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Injury on the right side of the brain may cause:

- Paralysis on the left side of the body

Quick, impulsive behavioral style

- Quick, impulsive behavioral style

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Brain stem stroke may also cause ataxia, which is the body's inability to coordinate how muscles move together. Ataxia can affect the movement of arms, legs and chest muscles and may be associated with tremors.

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Go to the [Tips for Daily Living Library](#) to get video tips and advice from stroke survivors.

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Stroke rehabilitation and recovery can be costly, even when a patient has good health

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these resources that may help ease the strain:

- Talk to the experts.

- Social workers can help you navigate private and government disability and insurance programs. Social workers are available at most hospitals and rehab facilities and can be located through eldercare.acl.gov

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disability can also be helpful.

- [AARP Money Management Program](#) — Daily money management service to help

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- [AARP Tax-Aide](#) — Aims to help provide assistance in completing tax forms for

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- [American Association of Daily Money Managers](#) — Daily money managers help

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- Understand your current health insurance

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