

Stroke rehabilitation in adults

Information for the public

Published: 18 October 2023

www.nice.org.uk

Stroke rehabilitation: what to expect

Stroke happens when blood flow to a part of the brain is cut off. It can cause lots of different types of problems that can be long-lasting. These can include things like:

- problems with the way you talk, move or swallow your food
- changes to how you see and hear
- changes to your understanding and your memory
- having less bladder and bowel control
- having shoulder pain, or muscle stiffness (called spasticity).

Stroke can also cause extreme tiredness and mental health problems like anxiety and depression.

Rehabilitation can help with common problems after stroke and the recovery of any skills you may have lost (like walking or dressing yourself). You may also need extra support to help you live as independently as possible after stroke, including help with ongoing health problems or going back to work.

We want this guideline to make a difference to anyone who needs rehabilitation after a stroke by making sure that:

- you are checked as soon as possible for a range of common problems (such as if you are feeling confused or are finding it hard to swallow)
- your healthcare team works with you to draw up a rehabilitation plan which should be started as soon as you feel ready
- you get the therapy and care you need to help your recovery in a place that works for you (such as in hospital or home, or online-based therapy)
- if you want, your family members and carers can help with your rehabilitation (for example, by helping you to relearn skills like talking)
- you and your family and carers get any longer-term support that is needed.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your health and care professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of any rehabilitation therapy you receive?
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to any rehabilitation therapy that worry you more than others?
- How long will it take for me to achieve my rehabilitation goals?
- What happens if you do not want to have therapy?

If you need more support to understand the information you are given, tell your health or care professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

NICE has also developed a [visual summary](#) for your health and care professional to use when they discuss your care or support needs with you.

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about stroke rehabilitation.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Different Strokes](#), 0345 1307172
- [Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke](#)
- [Stroke Association](#), 0303 3033 100

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by stroke and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-5477-3