

## After a Stroke: What do I Need to Do When I Get Home?

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At first, leaving the hospital may seem scary to you and your family because so many things may have changed. This handout will answer some of your questions about the important things you need to do to take care of yourself when you get home. Most of the information will apply to all stroke survivors. Double check your after visit summary (AVS) for more information.

### When do I need to seek emergency care?

Call **9-1-1 immediately** if you develop:

- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding others
- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm, or leg. Especially on one side of the body
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Call 911 if you believe you are experiencing a true emergency.

### Who should I call if I have stroke related questions?

- Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm:
  - Call the Stroke Clinic Patient Care Line **(888) 287-1082**.
- After 5pm or on weekends or holidays:
  - Call (734) 936-6267 and ask to speak to the Neurology Resident on-call.

### When should I call my primary care doctor?

For general medical questions or concerns, please call your primary care doctor.

## **What type of follow up appointments will I have?**

1. We will schedule a **stroke clinic** appointment with you at the time of discharge. If you do not have your appointment within 1 week, **please call** the CVC Stroke Clinic at **1(888) 287-1082** to schedule your appointment.
  - We will schedule referrals to specialty doctors at Michigan Medicine for you.
  - If you live a long distance away from Ann Arbor and would like to see a neurologist closer to home after discharge from the hospital, ask your doctor or their nurse if this is appropriate.
2. You will need to make an appointment with your **Primary Care Provider (PCP)** within 1-2 weeks after discharge.
  - If you do not have a PCP, talk to a nurse about getting a PCP. Please call the adult neurology clinic at **(734) 936-9020** and ask for a nurse.
  - If you do not have a PCP, you may be able to come to stroke bridge clinic until you can get an appointment with a new PCP (this may take months).
3. You may need to schedule an appointment for a **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) test** unless you are a neurosurgery patient. Neurosurgery often schedules the MRI and physician appointment at the same time.
  - If you need an MRI, you will receive instructions at the time of discharge from the hospital. The phone number to call to schedule your MRI is **(734) 936-4500**.

## **What type of follow up care will I have?**

### **Homecare**

Some patients may benefit from having nursing and therapy services in their own home. If you meet the conditions for home health services, the homecare agency will call you to schedule a time to come out for a visit. If you have not heard from the homecare agency after 24 hours, give them a call. You will find the phone number to call them on the after visit summary (AVS) you received from your nurse at the time of discharge.

## **What is a mobile cardiac telemetry study?**

Some patients may be asked to wear a portable heart monitor at home if they are experiencing abnormal heart rhythms that cannot be captured during a regular electrocardiogram (EKG). If this applies to you, you will wear a Life Watch® device to continuously monitor your heart's electrical activity and detect any abnormal heart rhythms. This technology sends information through your cell phone to a call center that is monitored 24 hours a day by certified cardiovascular technicians.

Often patients receive this monitor while in the hospital. If you do not go home with one, the Life Watch® company will contact you to make arrangements for you to receive the monitor. A Life Watch® company representative will be calling from a 1-800 number. People often mistake them for telemarketers. The representative will help you set up the monitor and show you how to use it. If they have not called you in 2 weeks, please call **1 (800) 418-4111** to schedule an appointment.

## **How do I schedule my therapy appointments?**

### **(Physical, Occupational, or Speech & Language Pathology)**

If you are going to a Michigan Medicine location, they will call you and schedule your appointment. If you have not heard from the Physical/Occupational Therapy department in one week, please call **(734) 936-7070** to schedule an appointment. If you have not heard from the Speech and Language Pathology department in one week, please call **(734) 763-4003** to schedule an appointment.

If you are going somewhere closer to home and you do not know what location to go to, talk to your primary care doctor. They will know of services in your area. Another option is to call your local hospital. You will need to hand carry a referral over to the facility.

## How do I manage my blood thinning medication?

If you were prescribed a blood thinning medication, your primary care doctor or the anticoagulation service at Michigan Medicine will manage your care.

- If your primary care doctor is managing your care, please call them as soon as possible after getting home. You will need to have your blood drawn soon after discharge.
- If you are using the anticoagulation service, the nurses will call you shortly after you return home to set up schedules for blood draws and to assist in safely regulating your medication. If you do not hear from them in 24 hours, call the anti-coagulation service at (734) 998-6944.

## What steps should I take to monitor my health at home?

### Blood pressure monitoring

After a stroke, it is very important to control your blood pressure to help prevent another one. Follow up with your Primary Care Doctor to make sure that your blood pressure is measured regularly.

## How do I find resources to stop smoking?

Quitting smoking can be difficult. You do not have to quit smoking alone. The Tobacco Consultation Service at Michigan Medicine or the quit smoking line can help with resources.

**MHealthy Tobacco Consultation Service:** (734) 998-6222

Website: <http://michmed.org/kv85v>

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