

# HERO

## Medication, Managed

### 10 Things To Do After Your Loved One Suffers A Stroke

Strokes are an unfortunate reality in today's world. [According to the CDC](#), they affect more than 795,000 people each year in the United States. In fact, the same article tells us that someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds. That means a lot of caregivers find themselves helping a loved one recover from a stroke, and it's a journey that can take a toll on both patient and caregiver.

Because many stroke survivors suffer from loss of muscle control, they may not be able to get around as easily as before. They might also have difficulty remembering things, and struggle to cope with their new reality. Caregivers don't only need to take care of the physical challenges a stroke leaves behind...they also need to look out for the emotional wellbeing of the person in their care as well.

The following list includes steps you can take to help you on this journey, with the goal of achieving the best outcome possible for everyone involved.

#### Establish Healthy Eating Habits

Help your loved one talk to their doctor about a healthy diet: fruits, vegetables, grains, and lean proteins. Limit their intake of saturated and trans fats, sodium, and added sugars. Simply put, healthy eating leads to improved vascular health, which, according to the [National Stroke Association](#), leads to a less likely chance of a stroke happening again.

#### Encourage an Active Lifestyle

Exercise can lower blood pressure, control cholesterol, manage weight, and fight depression, all of which help to reduce the risk of another stroke. Encourage your loved one to do aerobic activity -- pretty much anything that gets their heart rate up counts! Consider walking with your loved one or setting up "walking buddies" to help them stay motivated. As always, consult with their doctor to find an exercise program appropriate for their stage of recovery.

#### Stay on Top of Medication Schedules

After the stroke your loved one will most likely be prescribed several medications. From medicine to prevent blood clots and lower blood pressure to drugs that help regulate heart rate/rhythm and prevent seizures, these are an important aspect of their recovery (and in avoiding another stroke.) But keeping up with medication

schedules can be tough, and the risk of missing a critical dose is real. [Try a medication management device such as Hero](#). This intelligent in-home medication manager can load and dispense up to a 90-day supply (depending on the size of the pills) of 10 different medications, reminding your loved one when to take them with visual and audible reminders. The Hero app will even alert you if they miss a dose, so you can avoid unnecessary emergencies. With the emotional and physical toll of stroke recovery, this peace-of-mind goes a long way.

## **Prepare The Home Environment**

If you're taking care of your loved one in their home, make sure to safety-proof their house. Clear pathways, declutter, clean out the pantry and fridge to support healthy eating habits, set up their Hero device, and buy proper assistive devices, such as bathtub rails and chairs, walkers, or wheelchairs. If you are bringing them into your home, imagine your loved one going through the motions of their day, and appropriately adjust anything in the house to make their daily routine that much smoother.

## **Seek Support (there's plenty out there!)**

Your loved one may need a variety of support, and there's more out there than you might realize. Speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, as well as counselors are all available. Call your loved one's insurance company and engage with their doctors to find out more about getting them the support they need. You may even want to consider learning about support groups for other caregivers in your position. Talking to other people experiencing the same challenges can be comforting, and you might find some useful tips too.

## **Focus on Recovery Education**

There are a lot of resources available for people who have suffered a stroke (and their families) that can provide really useful information. Check out [Stroke Connection](#), a free online magazine with resources, recipes, survival stories, and more. There's even a section for caregivers, like you! During a very emotional time, it is nice to know you are not alone.

## **Delegate Where You Can**

Caregiving is a tough job and, as the saying goes, it takes a village. Don't be afraid to delegate some of the roles you now need to play. Call on friends and family to all pitch in. Ask someone to set up a meal train to provide healthy meals during the first month of recovery; ask a friend to research therapists; and give a family member a list of assistive devices to shop for. Remember -- people want to help, they just don't always know how. By assigning them a task to help out, it's a win-win for everyone involved.

## **Document. Document. Document.**

Phone calls, doctor visits, insurance communication: the list goes on and if you're not organized, you can end up finding yourself in a mess. Try keeping a caregiving notebook where you track how your loved one is feeling, as well as things you want to talk to the doctor about. File things like insurance papers and medication information straight away, and consider keeping a shareable Google doc with doctor's notes in so you can share with any other caregivers. Remember to take any paperwork, test results, or your own notes with you to all doctor's visits.

## **Know the Signs**

Unfortunately, having a stroke means a person is more at risk for having another in the future. Learn the signs of a stroke and make sure your loved one knows them too. This knowledge can literally save their life. Be aware of the sudden onset of the following symptoms: numbness on one side of the body, confusion, dizziness, extreme headache, and trouble speaking. Educate your loved one to note the time and immediately call 911 if any of the above should occur. [Check out this link for more information on how to recognize a stroke.](#)

## **Take Care of YOU**

Did we mention this is an emotional and physical journey? We're not just talking about the patient here, but for you, the caregiver, as well. Find caregiving support groups and be sure you are nurturing your own mental and physical wellbeing. It's normal to feel overwhelmed with the situation. Take breaks when you can and know that you are doing the very best you can do.

While strokes are scary business, know that rehabilitation *is* possible. The more support from family, friends, and doctors, the better the recovery rate. With these 10 tips, you are on the right path to helping your loved one reach their full recovery potential.