Ischemic stroke is a loss of blood and nutrients to an area of brain tissue that causes brain injury. It occurs when there is a blockage in a blood vessel that supplies oxygen and nutrients to a part of the brain. Brain tissue will begin to die quickly without oxygen and nutrients from blood.

Common treatments include medication and rehabilitation.

**Steps to Take**

**Home Care**

Work with your therapists and doctors to make appropriate changes at home to help you manage your recovery. Your therapist may also recommend certain devices to help you safely walk or do daily tasks. Some simple changes at home can help avoid tripping or falls if you have movement difficulties, such as:

- Keep walkways and floors clear of clutter.
- Make sure electrical cords are safely tucked away.
- Secure rugs with non skid pads under the rugs or by taping rugs to floors.
- Keep common items such as dishware, food items, or medication within easy reach.
- Consider installing rails or assistive bars near the toilet or shower.

Develop plans with family and friends to help with daily activities, such as transportation and meals.

**Diet**

Eat a healthy well-balanced diet. It should be rich in fruits and vegetables, and low in meat and dairy.

If you are having trouble chewing or swallowing, your doctor will recommend a therapy program. You may also work with a dietitian to help you plan your meals.

**Physical Activity**

Stay as active as possible. Inactivity can slow or prevent your recovery.

Physical and occupational therapy will help you learn how to manage any physical complications from the stroke. Your therapist will also recommend exercises to help you increase or maintain your strength.
• Avoid vigorous activity until your doctor says it is safe to do so.
• Ask your doctor when you will be able to return to work.
• Ask your doctor when you will be able to resume sexual activity.
• Do not drive unless your doctor has said it is okay to do so.

Medications

To reduce the risk of future stroke your doctor may recommend:

• Antiplatelet medication—to prevent clotting
• Anticoagulant medication—to thin the blood
• Antihypertensive medication—to lower blood pressure

Some of your regular medication may have been stopped after the stroke. Talk to your doctor before resuming any medication.

If you are taking medications, follow these general guidelines:

• Take your medication as directed. Do not change the amount or schedule.
• Ask what side effects could occur. Report them to your doctor.
• Talk to your doctor before you stop taking any prescription medication.
• Do not share your prescription medication.
• Medications can be dangerous when mixed. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking more than one medication, including over-the-counter products and supplements.
• Plan ahead for refills as needed.

Lifestyle Changes

An injury to the brain will take some time to recover. How much the stroke impacts your day to day life will depend on how severe the stroke was and what part of the brain was injured. To help you during your recovery:

• Include family and friends in your recovery process. They want to help.
• Consider joining a support group for emotional support.
• You and your partner may also be referred to sexual counseling. It will allow you both to talk about your concerns and learn how to safely resume sexual activity.

Friends and family can help your recovery by:

• Having one-on-one adult conversations.
• Speaking in a normal, comfortable tone and pace.
• Planning get togethers in quiet settings without distractions.
• Keeping in touch with caregivers for updates and care planning.

Depression is common after stroke. It may be due to the damage caused by the stroke, rather than just a reaction to disability. Working with a therapist and taking medications can help treat depression. If you have any depression symptoms, talk to your family and your doctor, who can refer you to a therapist.

Prevention

You and your doctor will plan treatment to prevent future strokes.
Certain medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes and obesity increase your risk of stroke. If you have any of these conditions, work with your doctor to manage them and decrease your risk of stroke. Personal habits such as smoking, frequent alcohol use, and physical inactivity can also increase your risk of stroke.

Know your personal risk factors for stroke. General habits that may reduce your risk of stroke include:

- Exercise regularly.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Limit dietary salt and fat.
- Stop smoking.
- Increase your consumption of fish.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation (1-2 drinks per day).
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Check blood pressure frequently. Follow your doctor's recommendations for keeping it in a safe range.
- Seek medical care if you have symptoms of a stroke, even if symptoms stop.
- Stop the use of recreational drugs.

**Follow-up**
Your doctor will want to check on your progress. Be sure to go to all recommended appointments to keep your recovery on track.

**Call Emergency Medical Services Right Away If Any of the Following Occur**

It is important that you and those around you know the warning signs for stroke. Call for emergency medical services right away if you have any of the following which may suggest a new stroke:

- Severe or unusual headache
- Loss of consciousness
- Weakness or numbness on one side of the body, including the face
- Seizures
- Confusion
- Sudden nausea and vomiting
- Blurry, dimming, double vision, or no vision
- Difficulty swallowing, talking, or comprehending others
- Lightheadedness, falling, or loss of balance
- New or unexpected symptoms

If you think you have an emergency, call for emergency medical services right away.