

Helpful Tips To Make Life More Comfortable After a Stroke

The after-effects of a stroke vary depending on the parts of the body affected and the stage of the person's recovery and rehabilitation. The tips below will assist you in choosing the ones that best fit your situation and experience.

Clothing

- Choose loose-fitting sleeves, armholes, pant legs and elastic or drawstring waistlines.
- Clothes that go over the head should have stretch openings with Velcro closures.
- Select clothes with easy-to-close fasteners in the front.
- If possible, replace buttons, zippers and laces on your favorite clothes with Velcro fasteners.
- Try out dressing aids (things that make dressing easier). Dressing aids can be found in drug and medical supply stores and include:
 - a mirror which hangs around the neck to comb hair, apply makeup and jewelry
 - a long-handled shoe horn
 - a device to help pull on stockings
- Try out adaptable clothing, which can be found on Web sites such as:
 - <http://www.makoa.org/clothing.htm>
 - <http://www.professionalfit.com>

Meals

- Soft foods and foods with stronger flavors may encourage stroke survivors who are not eating enough. A low-salt, low-fat, low-cholesterol diet might be prescribed by the physician to help prevent a recurrent stroke.
- Special utensils can help people with arm or hand problems
 - flatware with built-up handles which are easier to grasp
 - rocker knives that allow cutting food with one hand
 - attachable rings that fit around a plate and keep food from being pushed off the plate
- Ill-fitting dentures or a reduced sense of taste or smell can make food unappealing.
- Food difficult to chew should be cut into small pieces.
- If a stroke survivor is unable to obtain groceries and cook meals, resources are available:
 - Nutrition programs, such as Meals on Wheels and hot lunches offered through community centers
 - Many grocery stores can deliver food either by ordering on the Web or by telephone
 - Religious and community organizations have programs that transport people to the store

Staying safe and connected

- Write out emergency and family phone numbers in large print on index cards or whiteboards and place them in handy locations all over the home.
- Arrange for people to check in with the person at specific times during the day and evening.
- In all rooms, keep telephones or call devices within easy reach and consider purchasing an alert device for the patient to wear.

Preventing falls

- Help the stroke survivor to remain active.
- Strengthen leg muscles and balance through weight training and/or gentle exercise classes.
- Purchase flat, wide-toed shoes.
- Follow what has been taught in rehabilitation regarding limitations and when and for how long the person is to walk.
- Don't rely on furniture for support while walking. Always use the assistive walking device prescribed.
- Recognize which of the medications can cause drowsiness or have any other symptoms that might make the person feel dizzy and fall, and take necessary precautions.

To make cleaning and other household chores easier

- Use simple cleaning products such as disposable wipes and mop heads.
- Choose one multi-purpose cleaning solution for most cleaning.
- Work on small areas at a time and take frequent breaks. Allow friends, family, neighbors, a maid or cleaning service to do some of the work.

Additional Assistance

Consider Atlanta Home Care Partners, Inc. to help when additional assistance is needed in any area.