



Veterans Health Library

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For Caregivers: Preventing Another Stroke

Having had a stroke, your loved one is at higher risk of having another. Medication, exercise, and diet are keys to reducing this risk. Your loved one needs to be active each day now. Walking is a good way to get daily exercise, but check with a healthcare provider or therapist first to make sure your loved one can walk safely without risk of falling or other injury. You might also ask the healthcare provider to refer you to a dietitian. This specialist in nutrition can help you reduce many common risk factors for stroke. And if your loved one smokes, it's time to stop.



Taking Medication

Your loved one may take more than one type of medication. Each must be used as directed. If medications include a blood thinner, your loved one may need regular blood tests.

Tips for Safe Medication Use

- Make sure medications are taken on schedule. If timing is vital, set an alarm.
- Keep pill doses in a divided tray.
- Know which foods or liquids the patient should avoid while taking prescribed medications.

Reducing the Risk of Stroke

Many factors that increase the risk of stroke can be reduced. Your loved one's healthcare provider and a dietitian can advise ways to:

- Lower high blood pressure

- Improve cholesterol
- Control heart disease
- Manage diabetes
- Lose excess weight

Warning Signs of Another Stroke

If your loved one suddenly has any of the problems below, **call 911 immediately for emergency medical help.**

Numbness or weakness of the face, arms, or legs, especially on one side

Confusion or trouble speaking or understanding

Trouble seeing in one or both eyes

Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

Severe headache with no known cause