Tips for Care During Recovery from Stroke

Every year, approximately 795,000 people in the United States suffer from a stroke. This unfortunately common event can cause a variety of physical, cognitive and emotional conditions for its sufferers. If your loved one is just starting down the road to recovery after a stroke, knowing what recovery entails and what conditions to expect are some of the best things you can do to prepare to be a helper and caregiver.

Physical Recovery

Common changes and symptoms include:
- Pain, fatigue and sleep issues
- Paralysis or hemiparesis (muscle weakness on one side of the body)
- Seizures, epilepsy and spasticity (limited muscle movement or muscle spasms)
- Vision loss or impairment

Many of these conditions can be treated through physical or occupational therapies, which work to rehabilitate the brain as well as the body. While recovery may take a long time, you can help in the meantime by making your loved one’s home safe.

Cognitive Recovery

Common changes include:
- Aphasia (trouble finding the right words, understanding speech or reading/writing)
- Memory loss or vascular dementia.

Speech therapy can help with aphasia, and brain stimulation training improves thinking and memory loss. Unfortunately, there is no cure for dementia, but ensuring good health of the heart and blood vessels may slow the progression of vascular dementia or prevent further decline.

Emotional Recovery

Common symptoms include:
- **Depression** – Treatment is possible through medication and mental health or cognitive behavioral therapy. Since symptoms may be caused by coinciding physical conditions, taking care of physical health often alleviates depression symptoms.
- **PBA** – Pseudobulbar affect is an emotional ability in which the person experiences uncontrollable outbursts of crying or laughter. Once diagnosed, PBA can be treated.
Preventing Another Stroke

The best way to ensure optimal recovery is to work towards preventing a recurrent stroke. With healthy lifestyle changes, you and your loved one can significantly lower their risk. In addition to their doctor’s recovery plan, survivors should do the following things to keep their bodies healthy:

- Stop smoking and control alcohol use
- Eat a healthy diet
- Manage high blood pressure or atrial fibrillation
- Manage high cholesterol
- Increase physical activity
- Take all medications as prescribed

A Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located near Bryn Mawr Hospital, Bryn Mawr Terrace – part of Main Line Senior Care Alliance – has provided exceptional care and services to seniors and their families since 1966. It’s a tradition we’re proud to continue.

Today, Bryn Mawr Terrace serves as a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), offering a range of services – including short-term rehabilitation, traditional nursing care, independent living, personal care, memory care, restorative care and respite care – all in a setting that is warm, welcoming and nurturing. For more information on Bryn Mawr Terrace and our variety of needs-based lifestyle services, please call us at (610) 525-8300 or contact us online.

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