

STROKE SERIES SS4

YOU'VE HAD A STROKE



Chest
Heart &
Stroke
Scotland



Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland



**Chest Heart &
Stroke Scotland
improves the
quality of life for
people in Scotland
affected by chest,
heart and stroke
illness, through
medical research,
influencing public
policy, advice and
information and
support in the
community.**

FUNDRAISING

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is a wholly independent Scottish charity. We receive no core funding from Government or any public body or private agency and rely entirely on the Scottish public to raise the £7 million a year we need to help people with chest, heart and stroke illness throughout Scotland.

RESEARCH

We are one of Scotland's largest charitable funders of medical research, with a programme worth over £600,000 a year. We fund research projects throughout Scotland into all aspects of the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and social impact of chest, heart and stroke illness.

PERSONAL SUPPORT GRANTS

We provide small grants to people in financial difficulty, because of chest, heart or stroke illness, for items ranging from disability equipment and household goods to respite care and holidays.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

We give support to people whose communication skills are impaired after a stroke and those living with heart failure. The Volunteer Stroke Service (VSS) provides weekly group meetings and home visits for patients. The Heart Failure Support Service (HFSS) provides volunteer befrienders to reduce social isolation.

CHSS NURSES

Our nurses provide independent practical advice and support to those who have chest, heart and stroke illnesses, their families, carers and health professionals. There are dedicated nursing services in Fife, Forth Valley, Grampian, Highland, Lanarkshire, Lothian and Dumfries and Galloway. There is also a Scotland wide nurse led Advice Line (0845) 077 6000. Calls are charged at a local call rate (out of hours answerphone). We have a wide range of booklets, factsheets and videos on chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

CHSS provides support to affiliated chest, heart and stroke clubs through the Community Support Network. The clubs are independent and are run by local volunteers. The groups provide a range of activities and offer people support, stimulation and companionship in a friendly and relaxed environment. Please ask for more information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF
THE SERVICES ABOVE PLEASE CONTACT HEAD
OFFICE BY PHONING 0131 225 6963 OR VISIT
www.chss.org.uk**

Introduction	2
What is a stroke?	2
Why me?	3
How stroke affects you	4
How you may feel	5
Communication problems	6
Tests and investigations	7
Drug treatment:	8
• Thrombolysis or 'clot-busting' treatment	8
• Other drug treatment	9
Your recovery	11
Early mobilisation	12
Rehabilitation	12
Reducing the risk of a further stroke	14
Advice for family	15

YOU'VE HAD A STROKE

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to answer the immediate questions and worries after having a stroke.

Other more detailed information is available for when you require it, listed in the back of this booklet.

WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted.

There are two ways a stroke happens:

A clot. This is called an ischaemic stroke.





A bleed. This is called a haemorrhage.

- Some cells will recover.
- Some cells will be damaged or die.
- Other cells may take over from damaged cells.

WHY ME?

Strokes come on suddenly and without warning.

It is quite normal for the shock, disbelief and sense of loss to affect you and your family like a grief reaction.

HOW STROKE AFFECTS YOU

How stroke affects you depends on:

- Which part of the brain has been affected
- How severe the stroke is
- Your age and general health before the stroke

Here are some of the most common effects:

- Weakness or loss of movement and feeling down one side of the body
- Unable to get up and walk
- Difficulty with communication – you may not be able to find the right words or understand what is being said
- Difficulty with swallowing – you may not be allowed to eat or drink right away
- Vision problems
- Thinking, concentration and memory problems

HOW YOU MAY FEEL

You may:

- Feel tired and sleepy
- Feel unsure about what is happening
- Feel worried about what the future holds
- Have difficulty remembering information
- Find it helpful to get reassurance and have someone to tell you what has been happening.

The nurse in charge can arrange for you or your family to speak to any member of the team. The doctors, nurses and therapists can help you and can provide more information.



COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

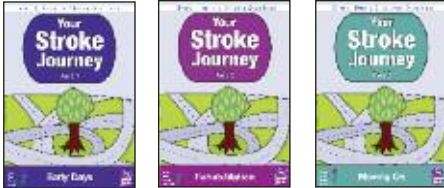
Communication problems after a stroke include:

- Difficulty understanding what is being said
- Difficulty making yourself understood
- Problems with written word

The general term for communication problems is Aphasia. Frustration is huge especially because of the suddenness of the onset.

You might find other forms of expression come out such as swearing or singing. This is common and people will help and support you with this difficulty.

APHASIA FRIENDLY RESOURCES



‘Your Stroke Journey’ is designed for people who have had a stroke and have aphasia. It comes in three short booklets looking at Early days, Rehabilitation and Moving On.

Aphasia ID Card:

Credit card size can be shown by people who have communication difficulties



Conversation Support Book

This is an A5 ring bound book with laminated pages that opens flat. It contains 44 pages of images on a variety of topics

to help support a conversation with someone who has difficulty communicating due to stroke. Individual copies are free to people in Scotland, otherwise £5 each.



Factsheet

F5 Helping someone with communication problems

A careful assessment needs to be made by the speech and language therapist who can show you ways to work on improving communication difficulties.

The use of picture cards and boards can be helpful, as well as establishing at least a 'yes' and 'no' with the person affected. Thumbs up or down can easily be developed into a simple conversation.

TESTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Your doctor or consultant will arrange some tests to:

- Find out what caused the stroke
- Confirm the symptoms are definitely due to the stroke
- Find out if you have had a clot or a bleed
- Find out what area of the brain was affected and how severely it was affected

You may have all or some of the following tests:

- Blood tests
- Chest x-ray
- ECG (electrocardiogram): recording of the electrical activity of the heart
- Brain scan: CT or MRI
- Carotid Doppler scan: ultrasound scan of the arteries in your neck
- Echocardiogram: ultrasound scan of your heart



DRUG TREATMENT

How your stroke is treated depends on:

- what type of stroke you have had
- any other medical conditions you may have
- the results of your brain scan

Thrombolysis – ‘clot-busting’ treatment

- Thrombolysis can only be given in hospitals equipped to offer this treatment.
- Only suitable if you have had a scan which shows you have not had a bleed.
- Not suitable for everybody - doctors will have to decide.
- Clot - busting drugs have to be given within 4.5 hours of symptoms starting.
- The drugs are given through a drip into your arm and you will have to be closely observed for 24 hours after.

Antiplatelets – blood thinning treatment

Most people who have not had a bleed will commence aspirin 300mg within 48 hours for at least 14 days.

Other drug treatment

- These drugs are commonly given after a stroke and are mainly to do with **reducing the risk** of another stroke.



Antiplatelets – used to thin the blood to help prevent clots forming.

Most people with ischaemic stroke will continue with a combination of low dose aspirin 75mg daily and dipyridamole 200mg modified release twice daily.

Clopidogrel 75mg daily can be used as an alternative if aspirin or aspirin and dipyridamole can't be tolerated due to sensitivity.

Statins – used to lower cholesterol. Most people with an ischaemic stroke will be given statins even if their cholesterol is not high. Those already taking statins should continue treatment.

Anticoagulants – prevent blood clots from forming. Warfarin may be given to people with ischaemic stroke who are found to be in atrial fibrillation.

Anti-hypertensives – used to control high blood pressure. Ace inhibitors and diuretics may be given to people with ischaemic stroke even if their blood pressure is not raised. After a bleed, treatment with ace inhibitors and diuretics should also be considered if blood pressure is raised.

Medicines can be provided in other forms if you have difficulty swallowing.

It is very important to take your medicines regularly, as prescribed by your doctor.



YOUR RECOVERY

It is probably unrealistic to expect that everything will go back to exactly the way it was before your stroke.

Everybody's recovery is different. No two strokes are the same.

- some people make a complete or near recovery within weeks or months
- about half will take months to years to gradually achieve or near complete recovery
- less than a third will not make a full recovery



EARLY MOBILISATION

Early mobilisation is about preventing complications through movement and correct positioning.

It is important because it:

- helps prevent limbs becoming stiff and sore
- helps recover posture, balance and movement
- makes it easier to eat and drink
- reduces risk of blood clots in the legs
- reduces risk of developing chest infections

REHABILITATION

The aim of rehabilitation is to become as independent as possible within the limitations of your stroke.

Where?

Rehabilitation can be carried out in:

- a Stroke Unit in hospital
- a Rehabilitation Unit in hospital
- a Community Hospital
- an Out Patient Clinic
- a Day Hospital
- your home by Community Therapists

Who is involved?

- All the people involved in your recovery and care are called the Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT).
- The team will involve you and discuss your care and progress with you.
- The team meets regularly to give everyone the opportunity to discuss your progress.
- Rehabilitation after a stroke is best achieved by a team approach.

How long for?

This is almost impossible to predict.

Every stroke is different.

There will come a point when formal therapy will end and you will have to continue working on your recovery on your own, using the skills and practising the exercises you have been taught.



REDUCING THE RISK OF FURTHER STROKE

See the CHSS booklet 'Reducing the risk of stroke' for more information.

- Know and control your cholesterol
- Know and control high blood pressure
- Control diabetes

Think about making lifestyle changes:

- Stop smoking
- Keep as active as you can within your abilities
- Control your weight
- Eat a healthy, varied diet
- Moderate your alcohol intake
- Avoid recreational drugs

CHSS has a variety of booklets and fact sheets with all the information you will need on these subjects or phone the Advice Line to speak to one of our nurses 0845 077 6000.



ADVICE FOR FAMILY

Coping when a family member has had a stroke can be difficult.

Daily routines and commitments are upset and it is a worrying time.

If you have any particular concerns about discharge planning, finances, transport or family commitments please ask to speak to a social worker.

How you can help

Your help is important to the recovery process, particularly with support issues.

- The person affected by stroke will need a lot of verbal and physical reassurance.
- It is important to be aware of and sensitive to the effects of the stroke and be patient (particularly if speech has been affected).
- The person will tire easily so keep visits short but frequent.
- Try to avoid too many people visiting at one time.
- Take some breaks yourself – share the visiting commitment so that you maintain your health and energy levels
- Other members of the family and friends may not understand what's happened, and feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. Explain to them what's happened and what they can do to help.
- Remember to keep the person up to date with what's been happening at home and with the family and pets.

- Think about things to take into hospital to do and share.
- Speak to members of the staff team for more ideas on how to help or if you would like to be more involved.

**Contact the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland
Advice Line nurses for confidential,
independent advice.**



**The line is open
Monday – Friday
9.30 – 4.00**

**0845 077 6000 or
0131 225 6963**

Out of hours answering machine.

Email: adviceline@chss.org.uk

The information contained in this booklet is based on current guidelines and is correct at time of printing. The content is also put out to peer, patient and expert review. If you have any comments about this booklet please contact Lorna McTernan, Health Information Manager, at the address on the facing page.

STROKE PUBLICATIONS

Booklets			
SS1	Stroke: a guide to your recovery	F10	10 common questions asked after a stroke
SS2	Stroke: a carers guide	F11	Mouthcare after a stroke
SS3	Reducing the risk of stroke	F12	Continence problems after stroke
SS4	I've had a stroke	F14	Eye problems after stroke
SS5	Understanding TIA's	F15	Memory problems after stroke
SS6	Sex after stroke illness	F16	Positioning and stroke
SS7	Stroke in younger people	F25	ACT FAST
SS8	Coming to terms with a stroke	F27	HRT and stroke
SS9	Thinking and behaviour issues after stroke	F29	Swallowing problems after stroke
S10	Thrombolysis after stroke	F31	Carotid endarterectomy
H4	Living with high blood pressure Aphasia Stroke Journey:	General Factsheets	
ASJ1	Part 1 Early days	F6	Holidays
ASJ2	Part 2 Rehabilitation	F7	Insurance companies
ASJ3	Part 3 Moving On	F8	Suggested booklet
CSB	Conversation Support Book (one copy free) £5	F13	Air travel for people affected by chest, heart and stroke illness
IDC	Aphasia ID Card	F17	Diabetes: links with heart disease and stroke
Video/DVDs		F18	Coping with tiredness
	Stroke Matters £5	F19	MCNs & You
Stroke Factsheets		F20	Illustrated risk factors (ethnic target)
F1	Smoking	F21	Illustrated risk factors (general target)
F2	Salt	F22	How to make the most of a visit to your doctor
F3	Cholesterol	F23	Living with stress and anxiety
F4	Warfarin	F24	Healthy eating
F5	Helping communication after stroke	F26	Understanding help in the community
F9	Driving after a stroke	F28	Glossary
		F30	Just move!
		F32	Pulmonary rehabilitation FAQs

ORDER FORM

Please send me the following:

TITLE	No. of copies

Up to 100 booklets free, up to 100 factsheets free

If you wish to order more than 100 booklets or factsheets please contact the Health Information department at the address opposite.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

A full publication list is available from Head Office.

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www.chss.org.uk

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is a wholly independent Scottish charity. We receive no core funding from Government or any public body or private agency.

We need your help to achieve our aim of improving the lives of those in Scotland with chest, heart and stroke illness. You can help by volunteering your time with our services, by supporting your local Regional office or as a fundraiser. You can help by giving now and in the future, by making a donation, organising a local fundraising event, leaving us a gift in your will or by setting up a regular Direct Debit.

Designed by Creative Link, North Berwick

If you would like to speak to one of our Advice Line nurses in confidence, phone Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line.

**Monday – Friday
9.30am – 4.00pm**

**0845 077 6000 or
0131 225 6963**

Email us: adviceline@chss.org.uk

There is a text relay service for the hearing-impaired.

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