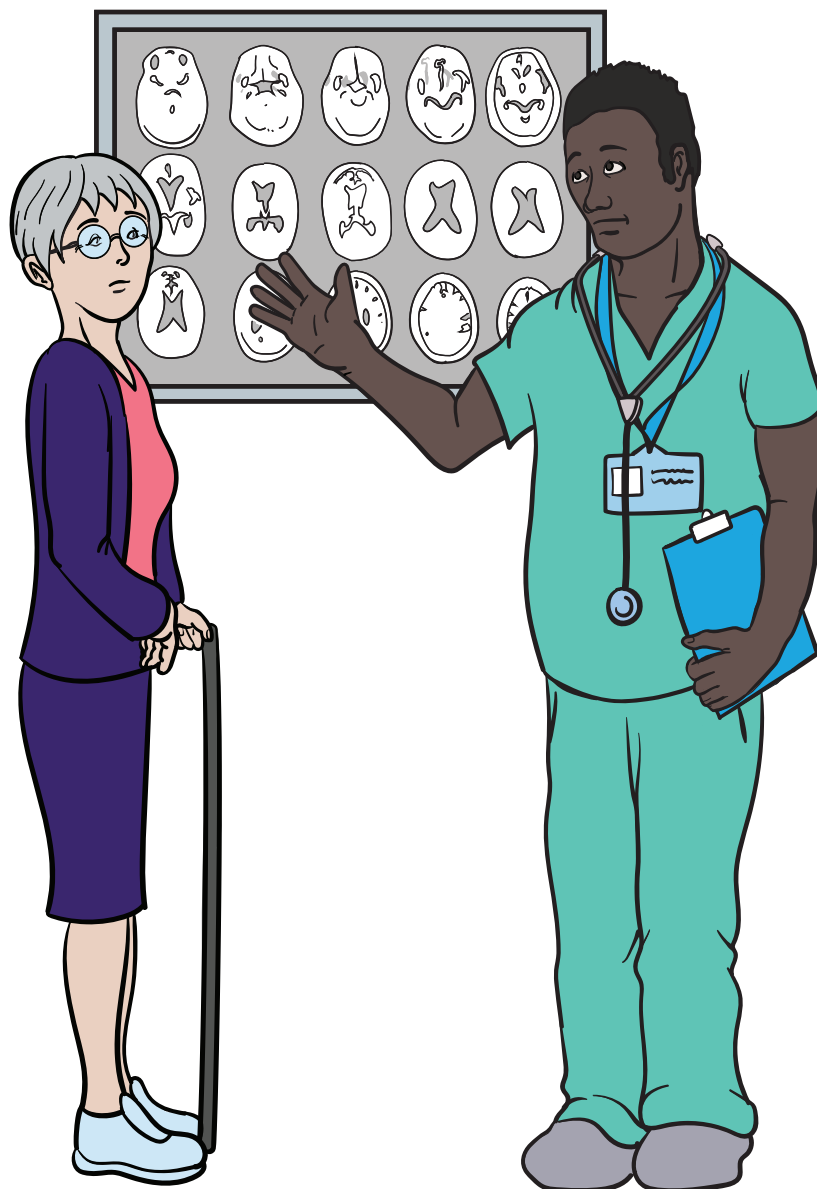
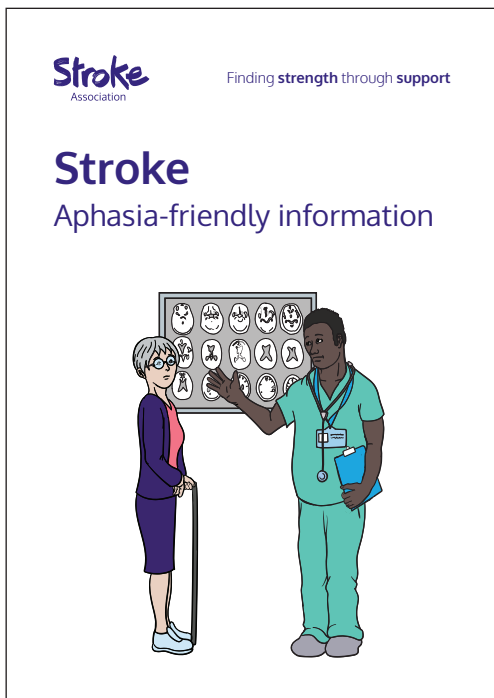


# Stroke

## Aphasia-friendly information



# Inside this guide



This guide is **about stroke**.







A stroke can make it **hard to read**.

If you **need help reading this guide**:

- **Ask someone to read with you.**
- **Ask someone to talk with you about the information.**

# Contents

	What is a stroke?	4
	Recovery	9
	Effects of stroke	20
	Staying healthy	37

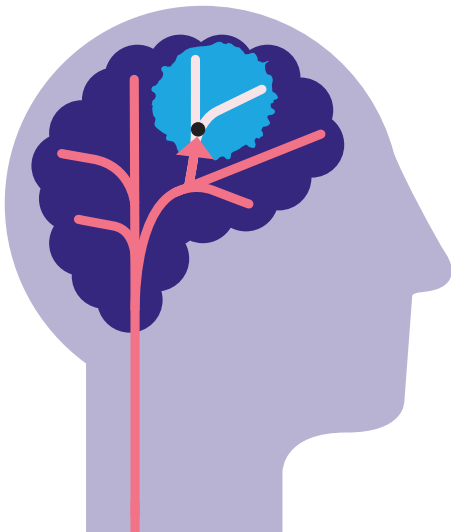


# What is a stroke?

A stroke is when part of your **brain loses** its **blood supply**.

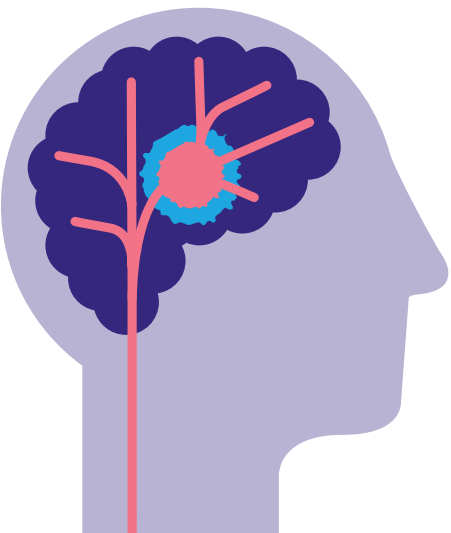
This **kills** brain **cells**.

There are **two main types** of **stroke**:



## 1. Ischaemic stroke:

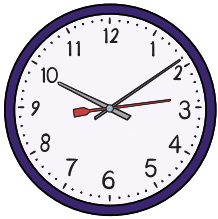
due to a **blocked blood vessel** in the brain. It is often called a **clot**.



## 2. Haemorrhagic stroke:

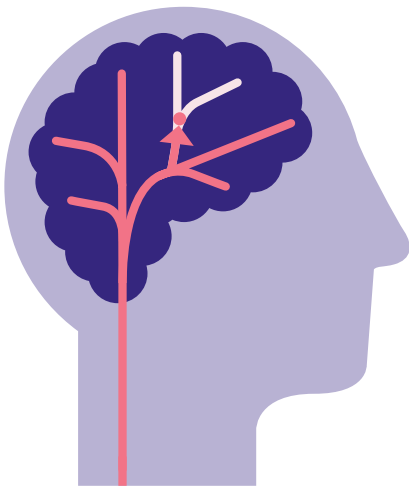
due to **bleeding** in or around the brain.

# Transient ischaemic attack (TIA or mini-stroke)



24 hours

A TIA is a stroke that lasts a **short time**.



Having a TIA means you are at **risk** of having a full **stroke**.

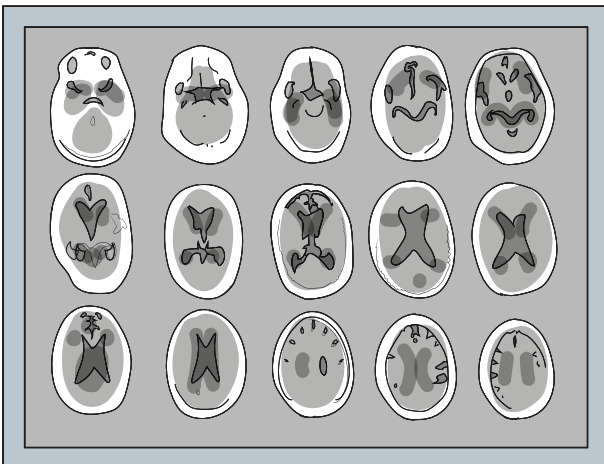


A TIA means you need **treatment** to **reduce** your **risk** of a stroke.

# When a stroke happens



A stroke is a **medical emergency**.



When you **go to hospital**:

- You have **brain scans, tests and treatment**.
- You may **feel tired and unwell**.



A stroke can have an **emotional impact**.

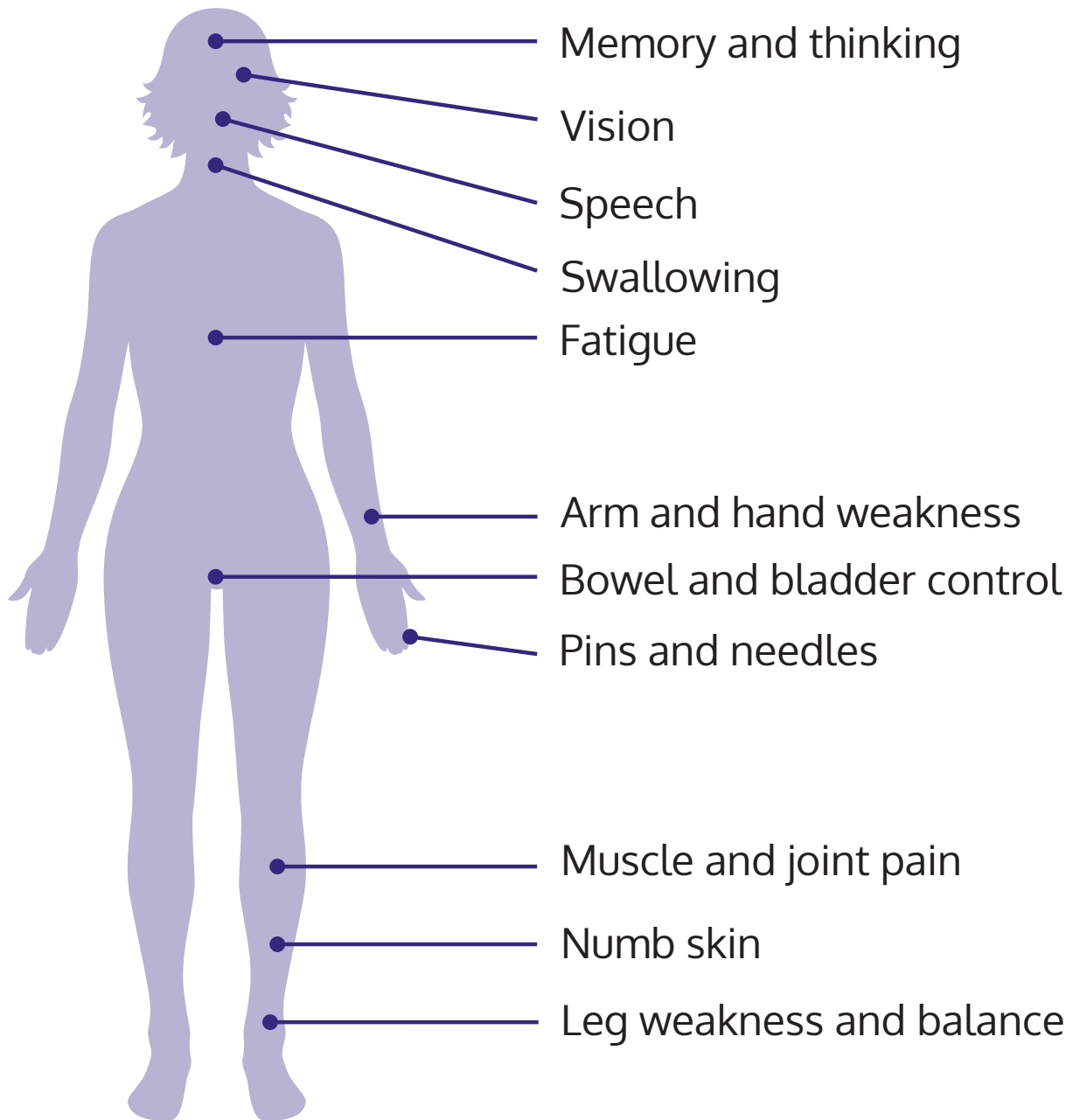
- You may **feel shocked** and **upset**.
- You may **feel confused**.



The **effects** of a stroke depend on:

- 1.** The **part** of your brain that is **damaged**.
- 2.** The **size** of the **damaged area**.

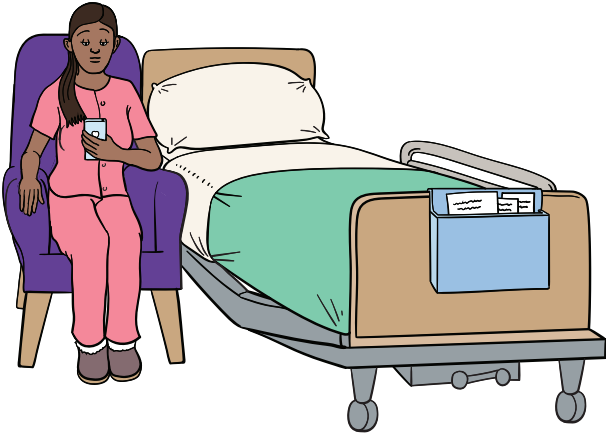
## A stroke can cause **problems** with:



Turn to page 20 to **find out more.**



# Recovery



Many effects of stroke improve in the **first weeks** and **months**.

But you can **keep recovering** for **years**.

Some problems can last a **long time**.

Every stroke is **different**.

Your **recovery** will be **unique** to you.

You will recover at your **own speed**.



# How does recovery happen?



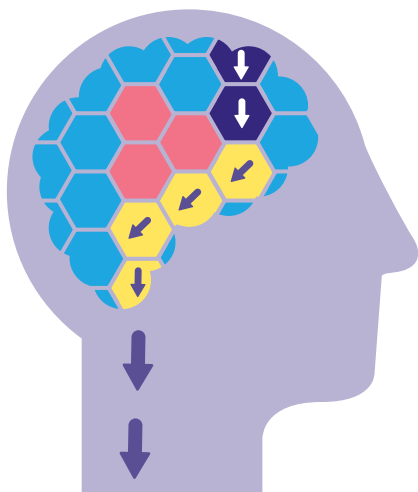
A stroke **damages** the **connections** between brain cells.

Your brain can **rebuild** some of the **connections**.

This is called **neuroplasticity**.

Doing **therapy** activities **helps** neuroplasticity.

**Repeating activities** builds up **more connections**.



# What does recovery mean?



You might **not** go back to how **you** were **before** the **stroke**.

But **many** people can:

- **Relearn communication skills.**
- **Improve abilities** like swallowing, walking and vision.
- Find **new ways** to enjoy life.



# Professionals who help you after a stroke



Doctors and nurses give **medical treatment** and **care**.

Pharmacists give **support** and advice with **medication**.

Therapists give **rehabilitation**.

# Therapy



Therapists **assess** you.

Together you **agree** your **goals**.

They give you **activities** to **practise**.

They give **advice** and **information**.

They **help** your **family** to **support** you.



# Types of therapist



Speech and language therapist



Physiotherapist



Occupational therapist

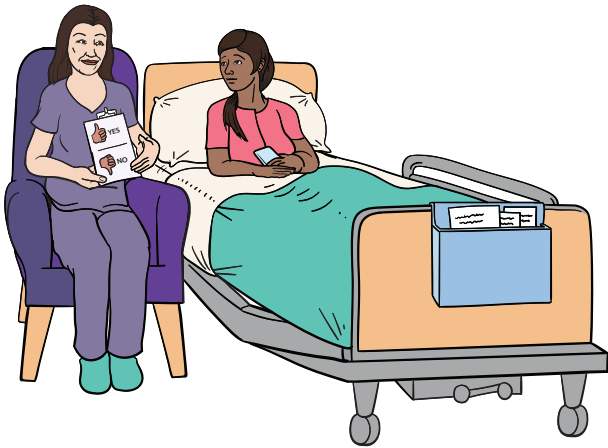


Dietitian



Psychologist

# When does therapy happen?



You will have **therapy soon** after your stroke.

You might **start in hospital**.



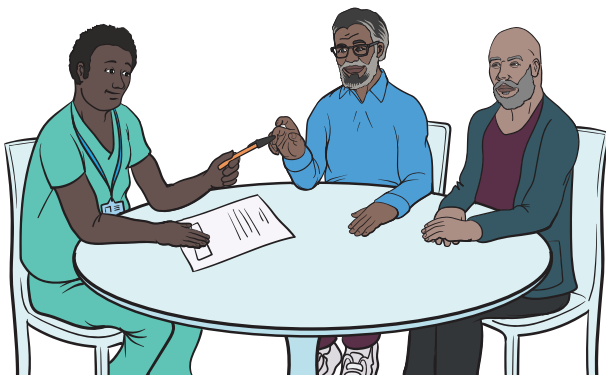
You carry on **practising** at **home**.

Your **family** or carers can **help** you practise.

# Leaving hospital

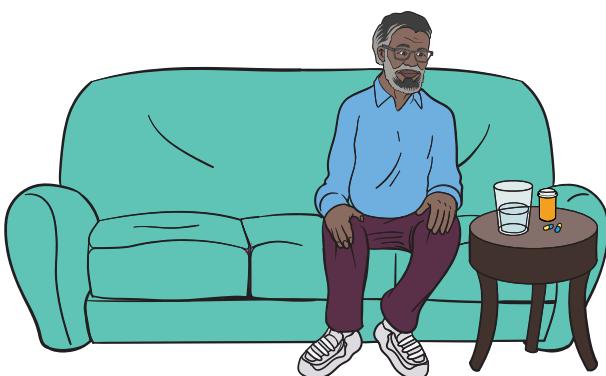
Hospital **discharge** is the **plan** for your care **after** you **leave hospital**.

Your stroke team **make** the discharge **plan with you**.



Together you will:

- **Plan your treatment** after leaving hospital.
- **Plan your therapy** after leaving hospital.



**Medical treatment and therapy** can happen **outside hospital**.

This can be:

- In a **rehabilitation centre**.
- In your **own home**.

## After you leave hospital



Your **GP** organises your care and **treatment**.

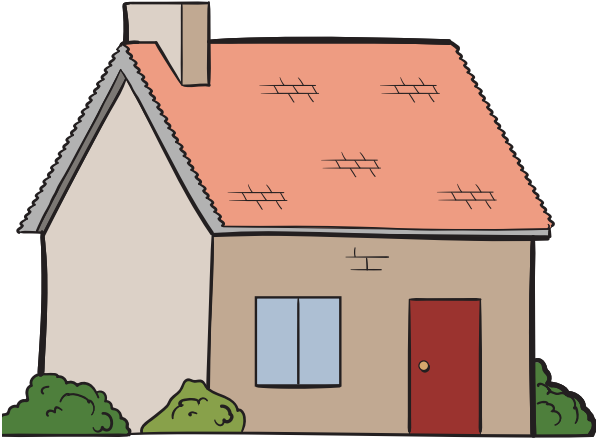
You may have a **community stroke team**.



This team may include **therapists** and **nurses**.

You may have a **social worker**.

# Accommodation after leaving hospital

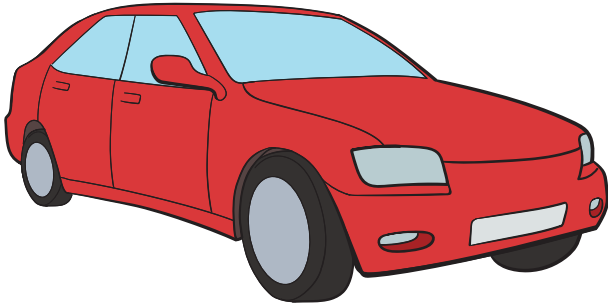


After **leaving hospital**, you might:

- Be able to **look after yourself**.
- Be able to **live independently** with some **support**.
- Need some **home adaptations**.
- **Need care** in your own home.
- Need **residential care**.

The **best** type of **accommodation** will be **discussed with you** and your **family**.

# Driving



By **law**, you **must not drive** for **one calendar month** after a stroke.

**Before you start driving** again, you must:

- Find out if you are **allowed** to drive.
- Tell your motor **insurance** company.

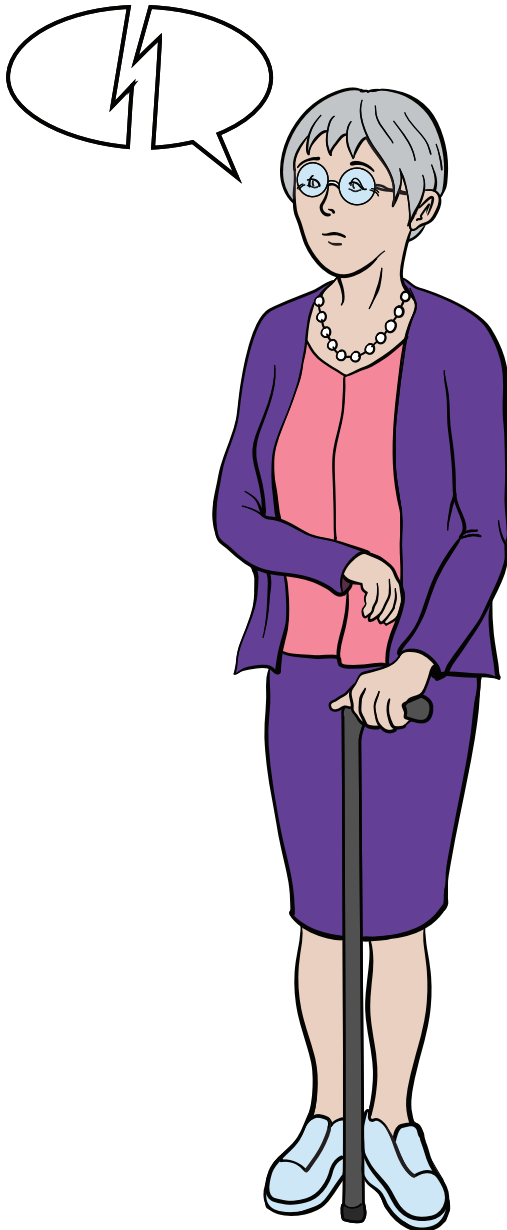
Find the **rules** about driving after stroke:

- Online:  
**[stroke.org.uk/driving](https://stroke.org.uk/driving)**
- Call our Stroke Support Helpline **0303 3033 100**.



# Effects of stroke

## Communication problems



About **two thirds** of people have **communication problems** after a stroke.

The **main types** of **communication problem** are:

- Aphasia.
- Dysarthria.
- Apraxia of speech.

You can have **more** than **one type**.

# Aphasia



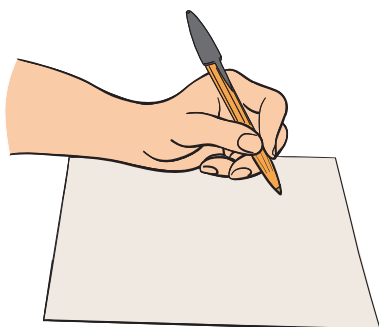
Aphasia is when the **language areas** of your brain are **damaged**.

About **40%** of people have aphasia **soon after** a stroke.



Aphasia can cause **problems** with:

- Speaking.
- Understanding what people say.
- Reading.
- Writing.
- Using numbers.

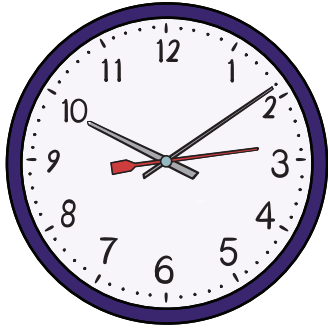




Aphasia means you have a problem **using language**.

It does **not** mean you are **less intelligent**.

You might **know** what you **want to say** but **cannot find the words**.



**Aphasia can change.**

You can **recover over time.**



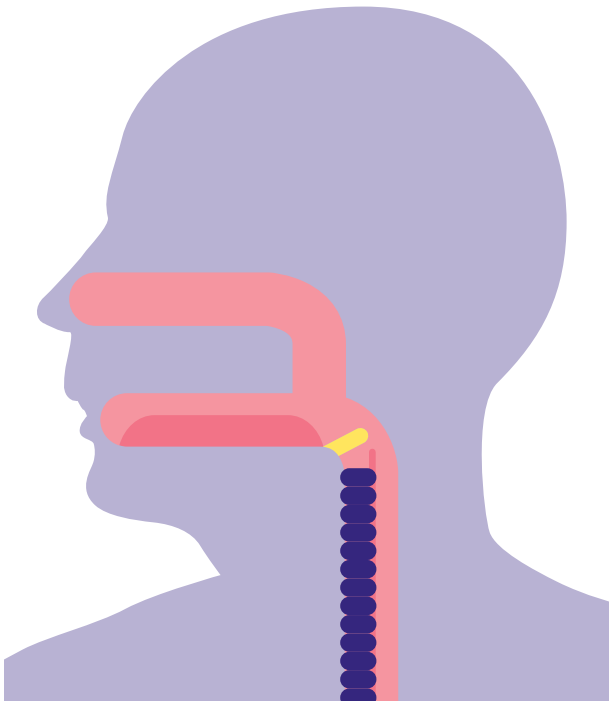
Aphasia can be **better** when you are **relaxed.**



It can be **worse** when you are **tired** or **stressed.**

**Some days** will be **better** than others.

# Dysarthria



A stroke can cause **muscle weakness** in your **mouth** and **throat**.

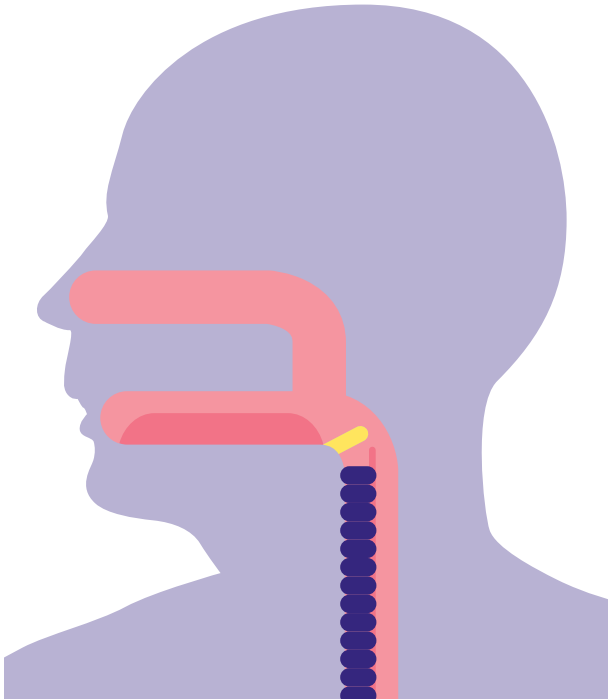
Your speech can be **slurred**.

It can be hard for others to **understand** you.

More than **half** of people have dysarthria after a stroke.

About a **quarter** of people have both **aphasia** and **dysarthria**.

# Apraxia of speech

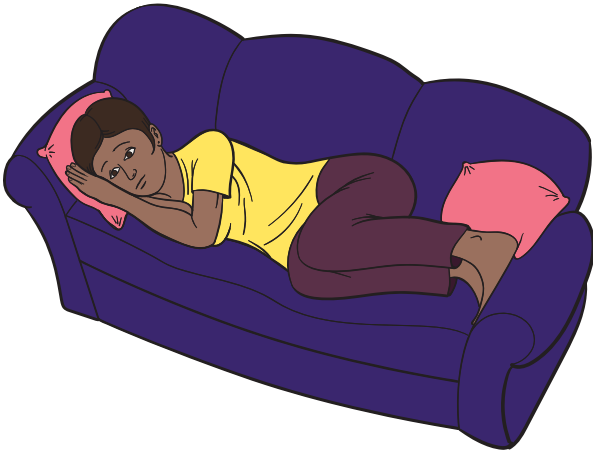


Apraxia can make it hard to **coordinate** the **movement** of your **mouth** and **tongue**.

When you speak, words can **sound wrong**.

You might **know** the **word**, but not be able to say it.

# Fatigue



Fatigue is **tiredness** that does **not** get **better** with **rest**.

Most people have **fatigue** after a **stroke**.

It often gets **better over time**.

If you have fatigue, contact your **stroke nurse** or **GP**.

# Emotional effects

A stroke can cause **feelings** like:

- **Anger and frustration.**
- **Grief and loss.**
- Some people **cry** or **laugh** for **no reason.**
- Some people feel **sad** or **low.**
- Some people feel very **anxious.**



It is **common** to feel this way after a stroke.

But if you have these feelings for a **long time**, you should **ask** for **help**.

Contact your **GP** or your **stroke nurse**.



## Impact on relationships



A stroke affects **people around you**.

They can feel **sad** and **worried**.

It can be **hard** to **communicate** with them.

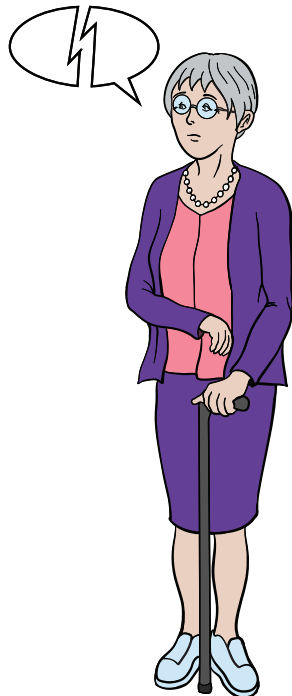
You might feel **isolated**.

A stroke can affect your **sex life**.

**Try:**

- **Talking** about how you feel.
- Keeping in touch with **family** and **friends**.
- Relationship **counselling**.

# Physical problems



A stroke can **affect any part** of your **body**.

This includes:

- **Weakness or paralysis** down **one side** of your body.
- Weak **leg muscles**.
- **Weakness** in your **arm** and **hand**.



# Swallowing problems



Your **swallowing** is **checked** soon after a stroke.

You may have **difficulties eating, drinking or swallowing.**

**Coughing or choking** can be a sign of swallowing problems.

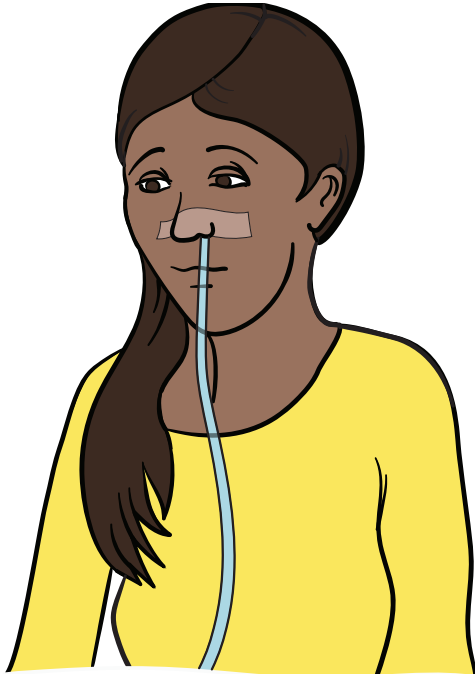
Swallowing problems can cause **chest infections.**



If you do not swallow properly, you **might need** to have:

- Thickened drinks.
- Soft food.
- Tube feeding.

Swallowing can **improve over time**.



# Vision problems

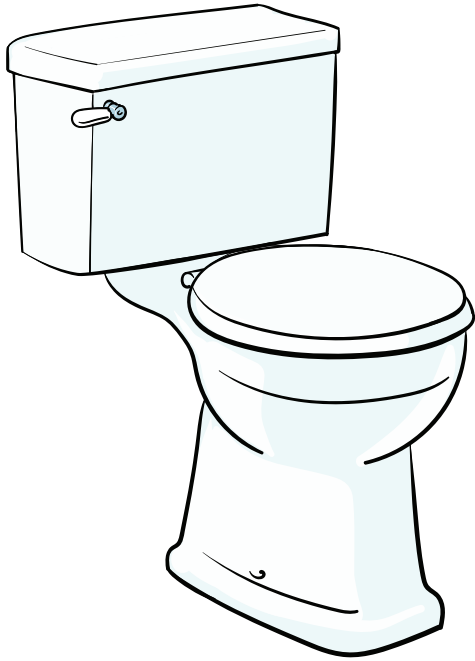


Many people have **vision problems** after a stroke.

You can:

- Be very **sensitive to light**.
- Have **missing areas** in your **vision**.
- Have **double vision**.

## Bladder and bowel problems



It can be **hard** to **control** when you need the toilet.

Many types of bladder and bowel problem **can be treated**.

Ask your **GP** or **stroke nurse** for help.

# Pain



You may have:

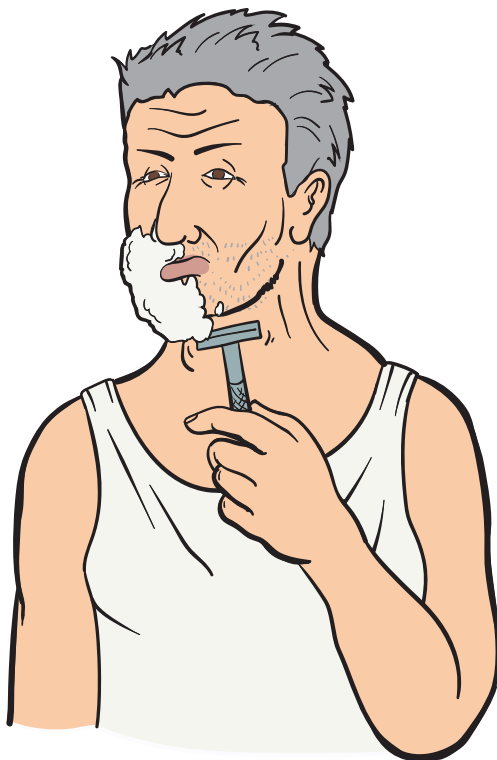
- **Muscle and joint pain.**
- **Headaches.**
- **Painful sensations, like pins and needles.**

# Memory and thinking problems



It can be **hard** to:

- **Concentrate.**
- **Remember things.**
- **Make plans** and solve problems.



You can have **spatial inattention.**

This means being **unaware** of things to **one side** of you.



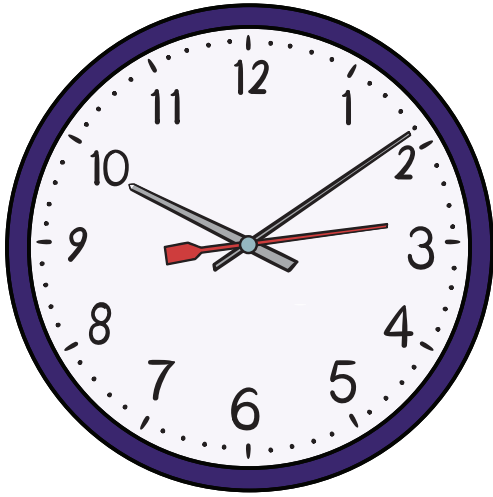
You can have **behaviour changes**.

This includes:

- **Losing interest** in things.
- Showing **aggression**.
- **Saying inappropriate** things.
- Being **impulsive**.



# Staying healthy

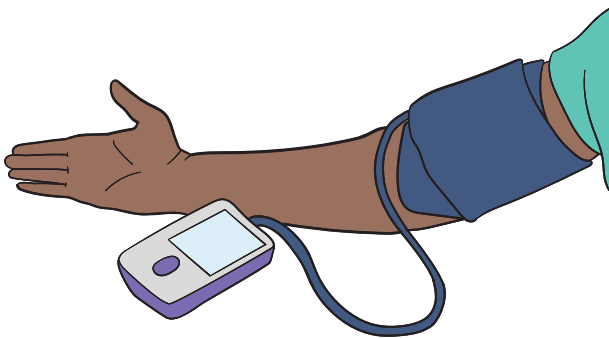


People say they **worry** about having **another stroke**.

But **over time**, your **risk** of another stroke **goes down**.

## What you can do

If you have one of these **health conditions** you might need treatment:



- High blood pressure.
- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat).
- Diabetes.
- High cholesterol.



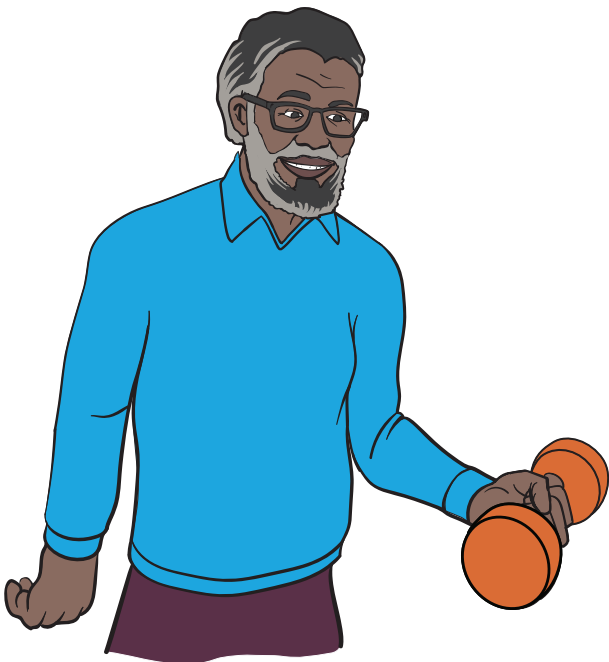
You may **need medication**.

Taking the **medication regularly** reduces your **risk** of another stroke.

A **healthy lifestyle** can help.

This includes:

- Being **active**.
- Eating **healthy food**.
- **Quitting smoking**.
- **Reducing alcohol**.



For **help** with **medication** and **lifestyle** changes, contact your **GP**, stroke nurse or **pharmacist**.

# Helping someone to read this information?

Here are some tips.

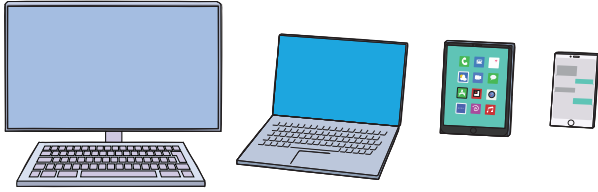
After a stroke, people can find it **hard** to **read** and **understand** information.



You can help by:

- **Talking** to them **about** this **information**.
- **Reading** it **aloud**.
- Looking at the **pictures** and **words** together.
- **Writing notes** on this guide.
- **Check** they **understand** with a 'yes or no', or thumbs up, thumbs down.
- If you are **not sure** how to help, **ask** them.





You can find **videos** and other **information** about stroke and aphasia on

**[stroke.org.uk/aphasia](https://stroke.org.uk/aphasia)**

# About our information

We create our information with **help** from **people affected by stroke** and **experts**.

We work hard to keep our information **up-to-date**. If we make a **mistake** we will **correct** it.

We **do not** control the information given by other **organisations** or websites.

This guide gives you **general** information.

If you have a **problem**, **speak** to your **health professionals**.

You can:

Ask a professional like a GP or pharmacist.



Contact our **Stroke Support Helpline**:  
0303 3033 100



To **tell us** what you **think** of this guide, email  
**feedback@stroke.org.uk**

## Accessible formats

To ask for audio or braille, email **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

**Notes:**

**Notes:**

# Remember, you are not alone.

We are here to **support you**  
throughout your **recovery**,  
whenever **you need us**.

## Contact us

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Stroke Support Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Textphone: **18001 0303 3033 100**

Email: **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

Website: **stroke.org.uk**

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Finding **strength** through **support**

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