



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR STAY

While you're here in the Stroke Unit, we want to make sure that you get the best care possible. We also want to give you the information you need so you can know what to expect while you're here.

YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

Your team includes physicians, nurses, social workers, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists. You and your family can speak directly with any of them if you have questions or concerns. We hope you'll join us in making decisions about your care. Please ask someone in your family to be your spokesperson to help share your progress to your family and friends.

WHILE YOU'RE HERE

Your doctor and health care team will meet with you. They'll explain your tests and treatments, and answer your questions. They may also tell you when you might be able to leave the hospital. They will develop a plan to help you recover as much function as you can. The plan will give steps to reduce your chance of having another stroke in the future.

First, we'll run a number of tests. They may include:

- Checking your blood pressure, pulse, breathing rate, and temperature
- A CT scan to identify the type of stroke you had and to see what part of your brain has been affected
- Chest X-rays
- Test(s) to see how well you can swallow and to decide what types of solid food and liquid you should have
- Tests to see how well you can move, talk, see, read, write, and understand words
- Exams to see how well your body can control your bladder and bowel functions
- Tests to show how well you can dress and bathe yourself

Your treatments will depend on your condition and the results of your tests. They might include:

- Oxygen to help you breathe easier
- Medications
- Insertion of an intravenous (IV) line to administer drugs
- Physical therapy to restore movement, strength, and function
- Occupational therapy to help you get back to your regular activities at home and at work
- Speech therapy to help you speak better and swallow

It's also very important to talk with your family about your Advance Health Care Directive, a form that allows someone else to speak for you when you cannot. If you don't have one yet, please fill one out. You can pick up the form in the Health Education Department at your medical center.

(please turn over)

GETTING READY TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

Before you leave, you'll meet with your health care team about:

- Any concerns you have about your plans to go home or to another type of medical facility
- Your medication(s) and possible side effects
- Feelings or unexpected emotional reactions you might have
- Special equipment you may need to help you move around
- The best things for you to eat and drink
- Balancing rest and activity
- Stopping smoking (if you smoke)
- Follow-up appointments with your physician and rehabilitation therapists (if required)
- Community support groups. You can find them at senior centers, adult day care centers, recreation centers, social services, churches, and synagogues. You can also check the Web sites of the American Heart Association (americanheart.org) and the American Stroke Association (strokeassociation.org).

The kind of therapy you need will guide where you will go after you leave the hospital. Early rehabilitation therapy is very important, and you may start therapy soon after you are admitted to the hospital. During your stay, your doctor will work with the therapists and other members of your team to decide on the right kind of therapy and the best place for your rehabilitation after you leave the hospital.

AFTER YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

Home: If your doctor feels that you are medically stable and can function safely at home, you might be able to go home. You will be discharged with orders for home health services or outpatient therapy. Home health services are for patients who are homebound and can't come to the medical center for regular appointments. (This does not include patients who simply lack transportation.) If you don't qualify for home health services, you will get outpatient therapy in the Physical Therapy Department at either our Sacramento Medical Center or Roseville Medical Center, whichever is closer to you. Outpatient care is only for those who can manage safely at home alone, or have enough support from family, friends, or paid caregivers.

Skilled nursing facility (SNF): If you need nursing care and more intensive daily physical therapy, you might go to a skilled nursing facility. Our patient care coordinator (PCC) will help you find the one that's right for you. You'll receive all the therapies that you need right there. They will be geared toward your specific needs.

As you improve, your therapy needs will change. The staff at the skilled nursing facility will evaluate you on a regular basis and change your therapy as needed. Speech or occupational therapy will also be tailored for you if you need them. If you will be going to an acute rehabilitation center in the future, the skilled nursing facility will prepare you for the therapy regimen that it will require.

Acute rehabilitation center: If you need intensive therapy and can do a more difficult rehabilitation program for several hours each day, you might go to an acute rehabilitation hospital or center. You will receive at least three hours of therapy each day. Kaiser Permanente's rehabilitation center is located in Vallejo.

The Stroke Information pamphlet you receive provides many details of managing your health. If you have any questions that aren't covered in that pamphlet or this brochure, please talk to a member of your health care team.