



Communicating with Your Health Care Team after a Stroke

When you've had a stroke, many different health professionals are involved in your care. This is your **health care team** will work hard to organize your care. However, sometimes it's hard for them to share all of the information they have as quickly as they would like. This means that you, your family, and your friends need to take an active role in your care after you leave the hospital.

The Michigan Stroke Transitions Trial (MISTT) has helped nearly 200 patients and caregivers returning home after a stroke. **Here we share some of what those patients and caregivers learned about communicating with their health care team. We hope you find this information useful.**

THINGS YOU SHOULD LEAVE THE HOSPITAL WITH WHEN DISCHARGED

- When you leave the hospital you will get a written summary of the care you received while you were there. This will include a description of what was wrong, the procedures and treatments you got, instructions for what to do when you get home, and what follow-up appointments have been made with other doctors. A nurse should review the discharge paperwork with you before you leave.
- You should also get a list of the medications you are taking. Some of the medications may be new or slightly different than what you were taking before. A member of your health care team should review this list, and talk with you about how to take these medications. They should also describe side effects you might experience and how the medications you are taking may interact.

THINGS YOU SHOULD DO WHEN YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

- If you don't understand something that you are given or told in the hospital, ask.
- Know what appointments have been made for you and when and where the appointments are.
- Know what appointments you need to make along with how and when to make them.

Turn the page for more tips and information.



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THINGS YOU SHOULD DO WHEN YOU GET HOME

- Review your list of medications with your pharmacist. Non-prescription drugs can sometimes interact negatively with prescriptions. Make sure you talk to the pharmacist about any over-the-counter drugs, herbals, vitamins and other supplements you may be taking.
- An appointment with your primary care physician soon after you get home is very important. Don't assume that an appointment with your primary care physician has been made for you. Call your doctor's office to make or confirm an appointment. Make sure your physician's office knows you were in the hospital and why. Ask your primary care physician's office what you need to bring with you to your scheduled appointment.

THINGS TO DO AT DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS

- Bring a list of your concerns and questions along with a list of your medications. Doctor appointments can go fast. Try to list questions in order of priority to make sure you talk about the most important ones first.
- Write notes during doctor appointments. Or have someone go with you who can take notes. Or record the conversation. It's easy to forget details. Keep a written record of notes to refer so it will help you when you need to remember or share information later.
- If you have questions about what you learned during an appointment, don't hesitate to call back and ask.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- It's okay if you forget something you were told as you were leaving the hospital. In fact, it will probably happen more than once. Ask for a phone number you can call if you have questions when you get home. Ask what hours someone is available to answer your questions.

Finally, know that your health care team is there to help you. The more you can be prepared to ask questions and share information, the more your health care team can do for you.

This information was developed by the Michigan Stroke Transitions Trial (MISTT) study team. The MISTT study was a PCORI-funded 3-year clinical trial designed to test interventions to assist stroke patients and caregivers in the transition after they returned home from the hospital. The information in this fact sheet was assembled through our collective experiences and conversations with stakeholder groups, the MISTT Advisory Board, and the patients and caregivers who participated in the trial. For further information go to: www.mistt.msu.edu

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