



Depression After Stroke

What is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that negatively affects how you feel, think and act. Depression can occur at any time after a stroke. Approximately 1/3 to 2/3 of people who have a stroke will experience depression.

Signs of Depression

- Feeling sad, hopeless or worthless
- Feeling anxious, irritable, frustrated, agitated or restless
- Loss of pleasure in your normal hobbies
- Changes in appetite, weight and sleep
- Low energy or tiredness
- Poor concentration or difficulty remembering things
- Slowed thinking or feeling confused
- Difficulty making decisions
- Unexplained symptoms (e.g. headaches, chronic pain, digestive issues)
- Frequent thoughts about dying or suicide

Post Stroke Depression Risk Factors

- Personal or family history of depression
- Requiring assistance with functional activities
- Cognitive difficulties
- Increased stroke severity
- Difficulty with communicating
- Poor social supports

Treatment for Depression

- Depression is treatable
- Report changes in mood to your healthcare team so that you can be referred to a healthcare provider who assesses and treats depression
- The most common treatments for depression are medication and counseling. You may need to take medication for several weeks before noticing a change in your mood. You may need to try multiple medications until you find the one that works best for you
- Share your feelings about the impact your stroke has had on your life
- Educate yourself about depression – knowledge is power
- Surround yourself with a good social network
- Have a consistent daily routine
- Involve yourself in activities that you enjoy (e.g. exercise, listening to music).