

# Stroke Education

This information is for patients who have had a stroke, a stroke-related condition or are at risk for stroke. It can help answer some of the most common questions you may have about a stroke diagnosis, personal stroke risk factors, your treatment plan to help prevent future strokes and recommendations for follow-up visits for stroke care and rehabilitation.

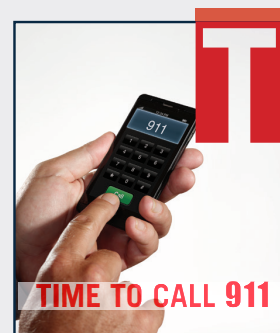
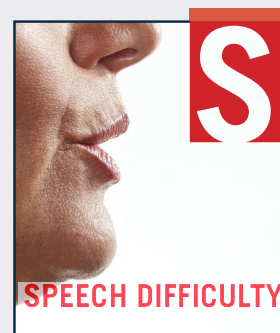
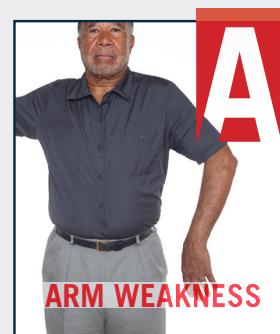
Valley cares deeply about our patients' recovery after stroke. What ever your recovery goals are, Valley is here to assist in your recovery journey, helping you reach your highest potential and improve your quality of life.

**Take this handout home with you.** It has important phone numbers, websites and other information. Please share this information with your primary care provider.

## There are many types of stroke

- ☐ An **ischemic stroke** is caused by blockage of a blood vessel (an *artery*) that brings oxygen and nutrients to the brain. The brain tissue that no longer receives its blood supply can die within a few minutes unless something is done to restore blood flow to all parts of the brain.
- ☐ An **intracerebral hemorrhage** is caused by the bleeding of a blood vessel within the brain. The bleeding causes a blood clot to form in the brain. This prevents normal blood flow and puts pressure on the brain that causes damage.
- ☐ A **subarachnoid hemorrhage** is caused by bleeding around the base of the brain, usually because of an aneurysm. Only about 5% of all strokes (5 out of 100) are subarachnoid hemorrhages.
- ☐ A **venous stroke** (or venous thrombosis) is caused by a blockage in a vein that drains blood out of the brain.
- ☐ A **transient ischemic attack** (TIA) is like a brief, small stroke. In a TIA, blood flow in the artery is blocked or decreased for a short time. This lack of blood causes that part of the brain to stop working properly for a short time. A TIA may cause the same symptoms as a stroke.
- ☐ **Other stroke-risk condition** or a combination of the conditions listed above.

Spot a stroke **FAST**: Face drooping;  
Arm weakness; Speech difficulty;  
Time to call 9-1-1



# What are my personal risk factors for stroke?

You are at risk for stroke because of the checked factors below:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure  | <input type="checkbox"/> Atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cholesterol problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug use                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking/tobacco use  | <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy alcohol use    | <input type="checkbox"/> Clotting disorder                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep apnea                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart problems       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of exercise     |  |

## How can I reduce my risk of stroke?

I can:

- **Have my blood pressure checked regularly.** If I have high blood pressure, I can take my medicines as prescribed.
- **Quit smoking, if I smoke.** My healthcare providers can help.
- **Learn to control my diabetes, if I have diabetes.** My healthcare providers can help.
- **Control my weight.** I can eat healthy food and the right portion sizes.
- **Limit or avoid alcohol.**
- **Avoid using illegal drugs.** I can ask for help if I think I have a drug problem.
- **Exercise regularly,** as advised by my healthcare providers and physical therapist.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** I can choose low-salt and low-fat foods and eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and fiber. I can drink water each day.
- **Set personal health goals.** My healthcare providers can help.
- **Control my cholesterol.** I can take my medicines as advised, exercise and eat foods that have no or low saturated fat.
- **Wear a CPAP if I have sleep apnea.**

If I think I have a heart problem, or my heartbeat is irregular or rapid:

- **I will see my primary care provider** for regular healthcare, as advised.
- **I will talk with my healthcare provider** to find out if I have atrial fibrillation or another heart condition that is related to stroke.
- **I will take my medicines as prescribed.** I will talk with my healthcare provider or pharmacist if I have any questions about my medicines or possible side effects. I will also:
  - Bring my medicine bottles to all of my healthcare appointments.
  - Request refills at least one week before I run out. I realize that many medicines to prevent a stroke need to be taken long-term.



# What are the warning signs of stroke?

**I will call 9-1-1 right away** if I have any of these new or worsening stroke symptoms:

- **Sudden weakness or numbness** in my face, arm or leg, especially if it affects just one side of my body.
- **Sudden confusion, difficulty speaking or having a hard time understanding others.**
- **Sudden trouble seeing** in one or both eyes. This may be double vision, tunnel vision, loss of vision, dimness or a “curtain” going across your eye.
- **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or a loss of balance or coordination.**
- **Sudden, severe headache** with no known cause (worst headache of my life).

## Follow-up stroke care and emergency action plan

I understand that having a plan can help me receive the care I need for stroke treatment, recovery and prevention. As a part of this plan, my healthcare team assigned a video for me to watch about stroke before I leave. I have been informed about how to watch this video through my television under the heading “Teach Me” and “Please Watch Me” and I know my nurse is available to help me as needed.

### Medical emergency I will:

- Call 9-1-1 if I think I am having stroke symptoms.
- Tell the operator that I think I am having a stroke or I will try to say the word “stroke.”
- Tell the operator the time my symptoms started, if I can.

### Primary healthcare

I will tell my primary care provider that I have been in the hospital for a stroke or a stroke-related condition. **If I don't have a primary care provider, I will start care with one.**

### Emergency action plan I will:

- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers handy, including 9-1-1 and my family's and healthcare provider's numbers.
- Keep a list of my health conditions, medicines I take and doses.
- Keep a copy of these lists by my phone and in my wallet or purse. I will always bring a copy to my medical appointments.

*A team of stroke specialists at Valley Medical Center's Neuroscience Institute will provide your care.*



## Eating well after stroke

Eating foods high in fiber and low in fat and salt will help reduce your risk of stroke. Try for 4 – 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. What counts as a serving?

### Vegetables



**Raw, leafy greens**  
1 cup



**Fresh, frozen, canned**  
1 cup



**Vegetable juice\***  
1/2 cup

### Fruits



**One medium fruit**  
3" diameter or 6 oz.



**Fresh, frozen or canned fruit**  
1/2 cup



**Dried fruit**  
1/4 cup



**Fruit juice\***  
1/2 cup

[heart.org/healthy-living](http://heart.org/healthy-living)

*Recommended daily goal based on 2,000 calorie/day eating pattern.*

*\*One serving of 100% fruit or vegetable juice can be one of your daily servings, but watch for calories & added sugars or sodium.*

## If I have questions, who do I call?

### For medical questions

- **Stroke is a medical emergency. I will call 9-1-1 right away if I have any stroke symptoms.**
- **For other medical questions** 24 hours a day, I will call 425.228.3440, ext 5150.

### For clinic appointments, I will call 425.690.3585.

My recommended stroke care appointments are listed on my discharge paperwork. I will call 425.690.3585 to confirm all appointments or reschedule, if needed:

- **Stroke Clinic at Valley Medical Center's Neuroscience Institute**—for appointments to monitor stroke recovery, review treatment plans and learn about how to control risk factors to help prevent future strokes.
- **Neurosurgery Clinic at Valley Medical Center's Neuroscience Institute**—for appointments to follow up with the Neurosurgery department if I had brain or aneurysm surgery.
- **Stroke Rehabilitation and Outpatient Therapy Services**—for appointments with Rehabilitation Medicine and speech, physical or occupational therapies to help with rehabilitation after a stroke. 425.690.3650.

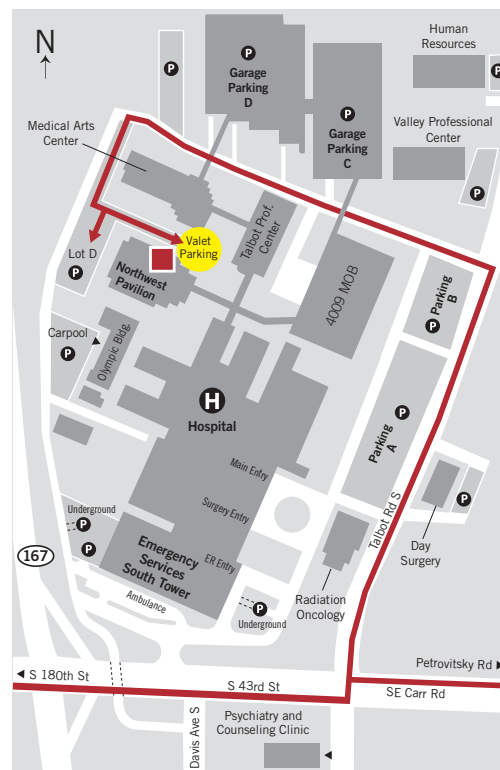
## Where can I learn more about stroke?

- Visit the Valley Medical Center website at [valleymed.org/stroke](http://valleymed.org/stroke)
- Learn about “Life After Stroke” at [strokeassociation.org](http://strokeassociation.org)
- Find many National Stroke Association resources for stroke survivors and their families at [stroke.org](http://stroke.org)
- Learn about stroke at the National Library of Medicine at [medlineplus.gov/stroke](http://medlineplus.gov/stroke) (available in 15 languages at [medlineplus.gov/languages/stroke](http://medlineplus.gov/languages/stroke))



Valley Medical Center is nationally recognized for achievement in stroke treatment, receiving the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association's 2020 Get with the Guidelines Gold Plus Elite Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes VMC's commitment and success in implementing excellent care for stroke patients, according to evidence-based guidelines.

Valley Medical Center is a Joint Commission-certified Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Center



**Driving directions:** From S. 43rd St. or SE Carr Road, drive north on Talbot Road. Take the 3rd entryway into the hospital campus. Drive to the west end of campus and park in Lot D or free valet park in front of the Northwest Pavilion. Rehabilitation Medicine and Outpatient Therapy Services are on the ground floor. For the Neuroscience Institute, take the elevator up to the first floor.



# YOUR PATHWAY TO STROKE RECOVERY:

## Navigating Your Care at Valley Medical Center



### Hospital

Our stroke specialists and hospital team will take care of you until you are ready to leave the hospital.

You will receive therapy and we will assess what your needs are, including equipment.

Together, you and our team will decide the best discharge plan (your care plan after you leave the hospital) that fits your goals and helps you gain the most from your stroke recovery.



### Rehabilitation Center

If you go to a rehabilitation center, you will get stronger and be more able to care for yourself. They will help you return home and set up your care needs.



### Home



### Therapy

Once you are home, you will start therapy either through home health or an outpatient therapy clinic.

### Valley's Stroke Clinic

The Stroke Clinic will call you 7 – 14 days after you are home to check on you.

#### Stroke Clinic Visit

Your visit will be scheduled 2 – 3 weeks after you leave the hospital. Call 425.690.3585, option 1 for Stroke Clinic. At your visit, we'll talk about:

- How you are doing
- Other tests or medications you need
- How to best prevent another stroke
- Whether you need more therapy or more rehab support



### Primary Care Visit

Your primary care provider would like to see you in 4 – 6 weeks after you are home.

### Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic

If you need a lot of help recovering after your stroke, we will refer you to our stroke rehab specialists at the Rehab Medicine Clinic. Call 425.690.3650 for an appointment.

They can also help with:

- Time off paperwork
- Return to driving
- Return to work
- Equipment needs



### Virtual Stroke Club

Stroke survivors and caregivers, join us and others from UW Medicine to help lay the foundation for recovery and transition into life after stroke. See [facebook.com/groups/vmcstrokeclub](https://facebook.com/groups/vmcstrokeclub).

**Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month: 6 – 7 PM on odd months:** Jan., March, May, July, Sept., Nov.  
**and 12 – 1 PM on even months:** Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec.

Type this Zoom link into your internet browser:  
[uwphi.zoom.us/j/96968133718](https://uwphi.zoom.us/j/96968133718)

Or call into this phone number:  
1.253.215.8782

Meeting ID: 969 6813 3718

**Questions?** Email  
[StrokeCenter@valleymed.org](mailto:StrokeCenter@valleymed.org)  
or call **425.690.3585**.

# Your Valley Medical Center Stroke Team: Here with You for Every Step of Your Recovery



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Specialties  
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**Sophia P. Wang, MD**

Specialties  
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