

What causes depression in stroke survivors?

Some scientists believe that the stroke-induced brain injury itself can cause depression. In most patients, they develop depression secondary to brain injury. The hypothesis is that some of the brain circuits known to be involved in depression can be affected by stroke. If you had bouts of depression before the stroke, it's more likely you'll develop it after.

Besides psychological issues, it's hardly surprising that the more disabling the stroke, the more likely it is that the survivor will experience depression. One study, in the journal Hospital Medicine, equated severe post-stroke disability with a two to three times greater risk for depression than the people who experienced little or no disability.

Suspect that you are depressed if you have experienced several of the following symptoms for two weeks or more: feelings of hopelessness, fatigue or lack of energy, no interest in activities you previously enjoyed, sleeping too little or too much, overeating or loss of appetite, low self-esteem, sadness. If you experience these things, ask your doctor to refer you to a mental health professional.

If you feel suicidal, you should contact your doctor or a mental health professional immediately and seek out a friend or family member for company. Anyone who feels suicidal should not be alone.



STROKE SUPPORT GROUP

Sponsored by the Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne

January/February 2010

Happy New Year! I am looking forward to our meetings this year and it is my hope that you will find comfort, support and ideas to help with daily living and recovery after having a stroke.

We will begin the year talking about coping and depression following a stroke. We are pleased to have Dr. Frances Goff, Neuropsychologist, as our speaker.

Please note that we are going to have an afternoon meeting in January. We will meet from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Day Room at the Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne. All future evening meetings will meet in the Special Functions Room 1.

Please Note: In the event of inclement weather, if Southwest Allen County Schools closes for the day or cancels evening activities, the Stroke Support Group will not meet on that date.

Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne
7970 W. Jefferson Blvd
Fort Wayne IN 46804-4140

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

What's the treatment for post-stroke depression?

The treatment can differ from the usual remedies because some medicines commonly used to treat depression may not be appropriate for stroke survivors. Medications commonly taken by people who have had strokes -- like beta blockers, a type of heart medication -- have been linked to depression. But there are many other medication choices.

In addition, seeking psychotherapy, setting goals for recovery and getting involved in social activities can all help. Here are some other ways for stroke survivors to free themselves from depression:

- Get involved in daily activities with friends or family. Many stroke survivors feel isolated and alone, even if they aren't physically incapacitated from the stroke.
- Find a support group with a trained facilitator. It could help provide emotional support as well as useful tips for managing your disabilities. Consult the National Stroke Association for groups near you.
- The American Heart Association now recommends aerobic and strengthening exercise for stroke survivors. If you're capable of exercising, ask your doctor for a referral to an exercise class. Many hospitals or senior centers offer exercise classes for stroke survivors.
- Ask your doctor how to relieve any physical discomforts like pain, muscle spasms and constipation that can all add to depression.
- If you're capable of volunteering, even if it's just an hour or two a week, it will not only help others, but could also help you feel better about yourself.

SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR –January & February 2010

Tuesday, January 5	<u>Stroke Support Group Meeting:</u> 12:30-1:30 p.m. Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne – Day Room. Guest Speaker is Frances Goff from the Fort Wayne Neurological Center
Tuesday, February 2	<u>Stroke Support Group Meeting:</u> 6:30-8:00 p.m. Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne – Special Functions Room 1 Guest Speaker from: Senior Health Insurance Program
Tuesday, February 16	<u>Newsletter Folding:</u> 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Rehab Hospital of Fort Wayne.

Directions:

The Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Wayne is located on the Lutheran Hospital Campus. Enter the campus off U.S. 24/ Jefferson Boulevard. As soon as you come into the campus, turn right at the first intersection. The second building on your right is the Rehabilitation Hospital.

***Please note that we are changing our meeting room beginning in February.** Entering through the front lobby, there will be signs directing you to the Special Functions Room 1 (in the back of the cafeteria). Please contact Julie Wolfe at (260) 435-6136 or at jwolfe@lutheran-hosp.com for further information.



If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please call Cheri Umphrey, Executive Assistant, at (260) 435-6105 or send an email to cumphrey@lutheran-hosp.com

On Tuesday February 2nd, at 6:30 p.m., we will have a representative from the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (S.H.I.P.) speak at our Stroke Support Group meeting.

This meeting was rescheduled from our November, 2009 meeting and will be very informative.

Please bring Medicare insurance questions.