

Safety and Stroke

Module 5



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Schedule

- Calling for help
- Falls
- Daily routine
- Household management
- Review



Calling for help

If you live independently or are left alone for periods of time, it is important to be able to call for help during an emergency.

Before staying home alone for any amount of time, check with your healthcare provider.



Calling for help

- Having a plan is important.
 - Ensure phones are charged and ringer is turned "ON"
 - Keep the phone within easy reach (walker basket).
 - Have a neighbor or loved one call to check-in when you are alone.
 - Write down important phone numbers, including 9-1-1, in **LARGE BOLD FONT**. Keep next to the phone.
- If using a phone is challenging:
 - Purchase a wearable medical alert system



Why do people keep asking me about falls?

Secondary conditions may increase your risk of falls if they are not addressed. This section will explain how you can modify your behavior and home to reduce fall risk.

A fall is unintentionally moving to the floor or other surface. Falls can cause physical injury and emotional distress.



Preventing a fall

- **Ask for help** before standing if you need it
- Turn on lights when walking at night
- Wear flat, wide-toe shoes
- Wear your brace or orthotic if you have one
- Always use your recommended walking device or wheelchair
 - Examples: wheelchair, walker, cane
- Slow down and do not rush
- Take rest breaks when you need to



Around the house

- Make sure you have good lighting
- Ensure thresholds between rooms are visible
 - Mark changes in surfaces with high-contrast electrical tape if needed
- Remove decorative throw rugs
- Reduce clutter around the house
- Place commonly used items within easy reach
- Use something to help carry items while you are using a walking device
 - Examples: walker tray, basket, backpack



Daily routine

Your routine will likely look different now.

- **Ask for help** when you need it
- Complete tasks while seated when needed
- Slow down, do not rush
- Plan ahead
 - Place commonly used items within easy reach
 - Gather all items before starting
 - (ie: all clothing in a pile easy to reach before getting dressed)
- Use recommended equipment



Household Management

Managing your household after stroke may look different than before your stroke. This section will review strategies to improve safety during activities within the home.

Follow recommendations from your healthcare team for help or supervision with activities from a friend or loved one.



Medication Management

After stroke, you will likely be taking new medications.

- Have a loved one or friend help you with managing your medications until you can do so without assistance
- Notify your healthcare provider if you are experiencing unwanted medication side-effects.
 - Examples: dizziness, sleepiness
 - Continue taking medication as prescribed unless your healthcare provider changes your prescription



Medication Management

- Making medication management easier:
 - Use a pill box to keep track of your medicine
 - Use a timer to remember to take your medicine
- Ask your pharmacist:
 - To provide easy-open containers (unless small children live with you)
 - To schedule automatic refills and deliver your medication to your home



Money Management

- Have a loved one or friend that you trust assist you with managing your finances until you can do so without assistance
- Set up automatic bill payments; your bank may be able to assist if needed



Meal times

- Ask for help from a friend or loved one with meal preparation as needed
- Avoid multi-tasking when working in the kitchen to improve safety
- Sit if needed while working in the kitchen to reduce risk of falling
- Move common items to be within reach

Review

- Ask for help around the house as needed
- Make sure you can use the phone to call for help
 - Charge phones, write down important numbers, have the phone within reach
- Change your behavior to reduce fall risk
 - Use your walking device, wear shoes, slow down
- Modify your home to reduce fall risk
 - Turn on lights, remove throw rugs, reduce clutter
- Take medications as prescribed
 - Use a pill box, set a reminder timer



References

- Boyt Schell, B. A. & Gillen, G. (2019). *Willard and Spackman's Occupational Therapy* (13th Edition). Wolters Kluwer.
- Nilsen, D. M. & Gillen, G. (2021). Cerebrovascular Accident. In D. Powers Durette & S. A. Gutman (Eds.), *Occupational Therapy for Physical Dysfunction: Eighth Edition* (pp. 735-764). Wolters Kluwer.

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