

Living with a critical illness: a stroke

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Working in the licensed trade can take its toll on your health. As the charity devoted to the industry we are familiar with the typical health concerns that people who work in the trade tend to suffer from.

Living with a long-term condition brings challenges and it's important to have the confidence, support and information to take control of your condition.

Stroke

Every year an estimated 150,000 people in the UK have a stroke. People over 65 years of age are most at risk from having strokes, although 25% of strokes occur in people who are under 65.

Like all organs, the brain needs the oxygen and nutrients provided by blood to function properly. If the supply of blood is restricted or stopped, brain cells begin to die. This can lead to brain damage and possibly death.

Smoking, being overweight, lack of exercise and a poor diet are also risk factors for stroke.

Also, conditions that affect the circulation of the

blood, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, atrial fibrillation (an irregular heartbeat) and diabetes, increase your risk of having a stroke.

The main symptoms of stroke can be remembered with the word **FAST: Face-Arms-Speech-Time**

- **Face** – the face may have dropped on one side; the person may not be able to smile or their mouth or eye may have dropped
- **Arms** – the person with suspected stroke may not be able to lift one or both arms and keep them there because of arm weakness or numbness
- **Speech** – their speech may be slurred or garbled, or the person may not be able to talk at all despite appearing to be awake
- **Time** – it is time to dial 999 immediately if you see any of these signs or symptoms.

Life after a stroke

Most often, strokes are treated with medicines. This generally includes to drugs prevent and remove blood clots, reduce blood pressure and reduce cholesterol levels. The damage caused by a stroke can be widespread and long-lasting.

Some people need to have a long period of rehabilitation before they can recover their former

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independence, while many will never fully recover cholesterol levels.

The two most common psychological conditions found in people after a stroke are:

- depression – many people experience intense bouts of crying and feel hopeless and withdrawn from social activities
- anxiety disorder – where people experience general feelings of fear and anxiety, often punctuated by intense, uncontrolled feelings of anxiety (anxiety attack).

You will receive a psychological assessment from a member of your healthcare team within the first month after your stroke.

Feelings of anger, anxiety, depression, frustration and bewilderment are all common, although they may fade over time. Your healthcare team, family, friends and organisations such as the Stroke Association can all provide you with support and care you need.

Further information

If you are experiencing any of the issues covered in this factsheet, in the first instance call our free helpline on 0808 801 0550.

Our Advisors will listen without judging and will work with you as best they can to achieve a positive outcome. If you prefer you can email: helpline@ltcharity.org.uk Visit our website: www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk It's full of useful information about the kind of issues we know people who work in the licensed trade face.

Stroke Association

The Stroke Association provides high quality, up-to-date stroke information for stroke patients, their families and carers.



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