

Depression After A Stroke



Everyone has had the feeling of sadness or being "blue." When this feeling lasts two weeks or more it may be depression, which can be treated.

The Major Signs Of Depression:

- Changes in appetite and weight
- Sleepless nights or not wanting to get out of bed
- Change in level of activity
- Feeling tired
- Feeling irritable
- Loss of interest in everyday activities
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Thinking about suicide
- Difficulty paying attention
- Increased physical complaints
- Feelings of sadness
- Excessive crying

This list cannot be used to make a diagnosis. If you or your family member show these signs and they do not go away, talk with your doctor.

How Common Is Depression After A Stroke?

Depression is common in people who have had a stroke. One out of every two people who have had stroke may become depressed.

Why Is Depression Common After Stroke?

Grief and feelings of loss are common after many illnesses. Stroke involves adjustment. Depression is the most common emotional reaction to stroke. Some depression is caused by the physical damage that the stroke causes in the brain. Medicines can help this kind of depression. If you start these medicines, do not stop taking them without talking to your doctor.

When Does Depression Develop?

Depression can start right after a stroke, during rehabilitation, or after you go home. Some studies suggest that people who have had strokes are at greatest risk for depression 6 months to 24 months after they leave the hospital.

What Can Be Done To Prevent Depression?

- Talk with others about your feelings
- Keep track of your progress
- Be realistic. Everyone has highs and lows in life
- Learn about stroke
- Talk with your health professional if sad feelings do not go away
- Exercise
- Maintain interests and hobbies

Where Can You Get Help In Dealing With Depression?

- When you are in the hospital or rehabilitation, talk with your social worker, nurse, or doctor.
- After discharge, call your family doctor, social worker or discuss your problems with the health professionals in the Stroke Clinic.
- The Out-Patient Psychiatric Clinic, in the OSU Clinic Building, can provide referral services, counseling, and support groups.
- There are many resources in Ohio. Some of these resources are privately funded, but many are publicly funded and charge a small fee or a fee based on your income. **First Link** is a free service that can help you find the right place to get help anywhere in Ohio. Look in the phone book for services in your area.

Services For A Stroke Patient With Depression

First Link

Telephone (614) 221-6766 or (614) 221-2255

Fax (614) 224-6866

This information and referral line is staffed 24 hours a day. Staff make referrals to appropriate non-profit human service providers in Franklin County or link the caller to resources in other Ohio areas.

National Foundation For Depressive Illness

Post Office Box 2257
New York, New York 10116
1-800-239-1265
www.depression.org

Information about depression and treatment, a list of referrals specific to the caller's area, and a bibliography are available on request.

National Mental Health Association

2001 N. Beauregard St., 12th Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22311
1-800-969-6642
www.nmha.org

A free booklet describing causes and treatment of clinical depression and how to find resources in your local area is available.

Twenty-Four Hour Services in the Columbus area:

- Columbus Area Mental Health (614) 252-0711
- OSU & Harding (614) 293-9600
- NetCare Corporation (614) 276-2273
- North Central Mental Health (614) 299-6600
- South East Community Mental Health (614) 444-0800
- Suicide Prevention Hot Line (614) 221-5445

Also refer to your Yellow Pages phone book under “Mental Health” for other options.

If you would like more written information, please call the Center for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

© Copyright, (2/2003)
Department of Rehabilitation Services
The Ohio State University Medical Center

- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191.