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let's talk about
Complications After Stroke

Your doctor's highest priorities after a stroke are to prevent complications from the stroke and to prevent another stroke. Your doctor must determine that you are medically stable and able to resume some self-care activities. This means that all complications must be treated and under control.

Some things happen as a direct result of injury to the brain due to a stroke. Others are because of a change in your abilities. For example, being unable to move freely can result in bedsores. Clinical depression can also occur with a stroke.

What are common complications of stroke?

The most common complications of stroke are:

- Brain edema — swelling of the brain after a stroke.
- Pneumonia — causes breathing problems, a complication of many major illnesses. Common swallowing problems after stroke can sometimes result in things "going down the wrong pipe", leading to aspiration pneumonia.
- Urinary tract infection and/or bladder control.
- Seizures — abnormal electrical activity in the brain causing convulsions.
- Clinical depression — a treatable illness that often occurs with stroke and causes unwanted emotional and physical reactions to changes and losses.
- Bedsores — pressure ulcers that result from decreased ability to move and pressure on areas of the body because of immobility.



- Limb contractures — shortened muscles in an arm or leg from reduced range of motion or lack of exercise.
- Shoulder pain — stems from lack of support of an arm due to weakness or paralysis. This usually is caused when the affected arm hangs resulting in pulling of the arm on the shoulder.
- Deep venous thrombosis — blood clots form in veins of the legs because of immobility from stroke.

What can be done?

If you need medical treatment, your doctor will prescribe it.

- Medical treatment often involves medical supervision, monitoring and drug therapies.
- Physical treatment usually involves some type of activity that may be done by you, a healthcare provider or by both of you working together.