ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

Stroke (Cerebrovascular Accident)

A stroke happens when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, either due to a clot (ischemic) or a burst vessel (hemorrhagic). This leads to brain damage, affecting movement, speech, and other cognitive functions.

Common Symptoms:

Symptoms may differ from person to person

- Sudden weakness or paralysis (often on one side of the body)
- Trouble speaking
- Blurred vision
- Severe headache
- In some cases, patients may experience loss of consciousness.

Causes:

Potential causes:

- High blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, and atrial fibrillation increase stroke risk.

Hospice Considerations:

Acute stroke treatments focus on restoring blood flow or stopping bleeding, but in hospice care, comfort measures are prioritized.

- **Severe Disability:** When a stroke results in severe, irreversible disability and the patient requires extensive assistance with daily activities.
- **Declining Health:** When the patient experiences significant complications, such as repeated infections or inability to maintain nutritional intake.
- **Quality of Life:** When the focus shifts to improving comfort and managing end-of-life symptoms rather than aggressive treatment.

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Symptom Management Tips:

- **Pain:** Use medications like acetaminophen or opioids for pain management.
- **Muscle Spasticity:** Medications like muscle relaxants may be used to manage spasticity and maintain mobility.
- **Communication:** Use simple, clear language and visual aids.
- **Safety:** Implement safety measures to prevent falls and injuries. Ensure a safe home environment with proper supports.

How to Help:

- **Patient Tips:**
  - **Safety:** Use assistive devices, like canes or walkers, to prevent falls if mobility is impaired.
  - **Stay Positive:** Celebrate small victories in recovery and set realistic, achievable goals.
- **Caregiver Tips:**
  - **Safety Measures**: Ensure that the home is adapted for the patient's mobility and safety needs, such as grab bars or ramps.
  - **Speech Therapy:** Encourage communication, using gestures or technology if speech is impaired.
  - **Patience:** Stroke recovery can be slow; offer patience and support during physical and emotional challenges.

St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

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