



# Stroke Rehabilitation:

## The Nurses Role

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The goal of the rehabilitation nurse is not to cure an individual, but to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. The rehabilitation nurse has the closest and most frequent contact with the individual. In addition to working with the patient on body functions such as bladder and bowel, caring for and teaching about skin care, position and medication, the nurse must see that the patient practices the skills taught to them by their various therapists.

### Reintegrate affected side:

- Remind patient to scan affected side of environment
- Talk to patient and give care on affected side
- Ask visitors to stay to affected side, keep eye contact and touch affected arm/hand
- Arrange personal items such as comb and razor on affected side

- Put a bright object (ball or card) on affected side
- Put call light switch on unaffected side

### Communicate effectively:

- Maintain eye contact
- Don't raise your voice: Patient has no hearing difficulties
- Allow the patient time to respond
- Develop a positive relationship
- Always be honest
- Acknowledge the patient's frustration
- Use silence effectively: You can communicate without words
- Preserve patient's dignity

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### Manage symptoms:

- Dysphagia
- Guide patient through each swallow and make sure fluids don't enter airway
- Water is the hardest thing to swallow
- Monitor patient for pneumonia
- Monitor nutritional status

### Bladder function:

- Remove catheter A.S.A.P.
- Most stroke-related urine problems clear up within 2 weeks
- Check for incontinence

### Bowel function:

- Watch for constipation, depression:
- Anorexia, insomnia, tearfulness, withdrawal



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