

Positioning in Bed After Stroke

A stroke can cause weakness (hemiplegia), changes in sensation and body awareness, and altered muscle tone impacting a person's ability to position themselves in bed. Careful positioning can improve joint alignment, awareness of the affected side, reduce fatigue and improve comfort and safety.

What you should know

- A stroke can cause a lack of sensation on one side of the body, so it is important to monitor the person's skin for redness or other signs of skin breakdown
- Development of shoulder and/or arm pain is common after a stroke. The affected arm should always be well supported to prevent pain and injury (See Smart Tips for Stroke Care- Hemiplegic Arm and Hand)
- Positioning the person on the affected side for a period of time has benefits such as increasing circulation, sensation and awareness

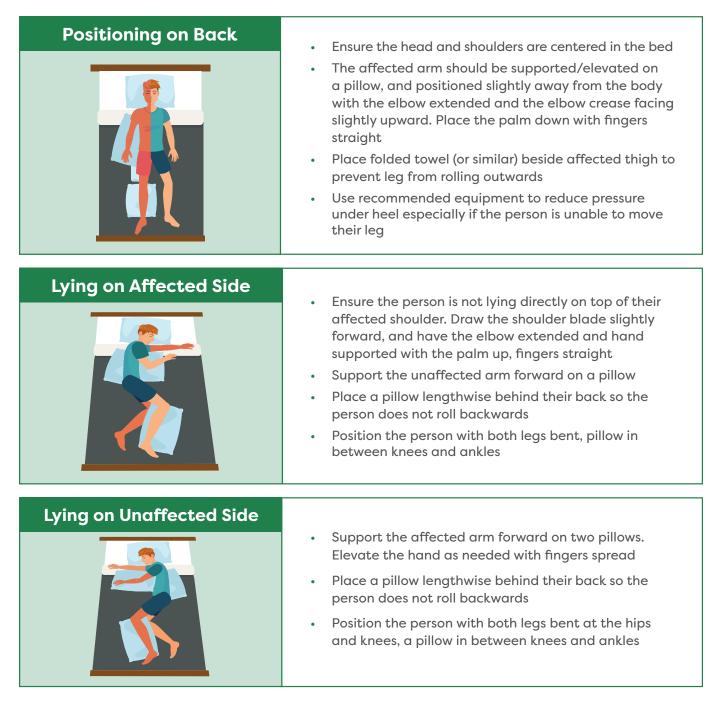
Smart Tips - Always follow the care plan!

Before You Start	 Explain to the person what you are going to do and encourage them to participate Ensure you have everything you need to position the person safely, such as extra help, or devices/equipment (e.g. slider sheet) as required Ensure that you use good mechanics to avoid injury
Safety Considerations	 Take your time. Position the person by moving slowly and gently, be mindful of the person's arm as you move Avoid pulling on the person's affected shoulder/arm as this can cause irreversible injury Check that the person is comfortable before you leave the room Ensure the head of bed is at the recommended height (especially if the person has difficulty swallowing) Make sure all necessary items are within the person's view and reach (e.g. call bell) on the unaffected side Check on the person regularly and offer position changes frequently (e.g. every 2 hours)

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Bed Positioning Examples

The proposed examples are based on the ideal position of a person with stroke. Some individuals may have limitations that make these recommendations uncomfortable or even impossible. Please consider comfort first as you position the person.



Seek extra support

/ All team members have a role to play in positioning a person with stroke

Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists are experts in positioning. It may be helpful to involve them in the person's care