



RESCUE

Resources & Education for Stroke Caregivers'
Understanding & Empowerment

May 2012

www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue

This newsletter is a product of a VA research project titled "[Web-based Informational Materials for Caregivers of Veterans Post-Stroke](#)" (Project #SDP 06-327), funded by the VA Health Services Research & Development Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI). The objective of the project was to develop stroke and caregiver related information and materials for VA website. The information for the website was based on identified gaps in currently available information and formative evaluation findings. Visit the RESCUE website TODAY @ www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue.

The Spanish RESCUE Website is Live!

Stroke and Caregiver Information - *En Español*



The Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States. Over the past ten years, the Hispanic population grew approximately 43%. As the number of Hispanics increases, the need for health-information available *in Spanish* also increases.

A primary health concern for Hispanics is stroke. At younger ages, Hispanics have higher rates of strokes than whites. This may be because Hispanics have several risk factors that increase their likelihood of stroke. For instance, Hispanics' high rates of diabetes and hypertension may increase their risk of having a stroke.

Stroke-information is also important for Hispanic caregivers. Caring for a stroke-survivor causes greater depression, burden, and strain for Hispanic than White caregivers. Hispanics also tend to rely on their families and the community before seeking professional help.

The RESCUE website, *now available in Spanish*, contains 45 Fact Sheets covering Información General sobre el Derrame Cerebral (General Stroke Information), Cómo Obtener Buena Información y Atención Médica (Obtaining Good Healthcare & Information), and Cómo Cuidarse a Sí Mismo (Understanding How Caring for a Loved One Affects You).



To learn more about stroke and the resources available to stroke caregivers, visit:

www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue-espanol





New Additions!

There are several new additions to the RESOLVE website, such as information about “**Healthy Eating**”, “**Spirituality**”, and much more!



Did you know?

- More than one-third of caregivers suffer from poor health themselves.
- 29% of female caregivers have passed up a job promotion, training or assignment to take care of a stroke-survivor.
- Respite and social support make caregivers less stressed, more satisfied, and better able to provide care for longer periods of time.

Family Caregiver Alliance

Advice from Caregivers to Caregivers

Caregivers often have several different roles to fulfill – parent, spouse, boss, student, etc. Managing the responsibilities of each role can be stressful.

To help deal with stress, we list 5 helpful tips *from* caregivers *to* caregivers .

- 1. Make time for yourself.** You will be a better caregiver if you take time to do things you enjoy.
- 2. Set priorities.** Identify what is most important. Say “no” to things that are less important.
- 3. Accept that you cannot do everything.** Don’t feel guilty about asking for help.
- 4. Have a “back-up” plan.** Know who will provide care during emergencies.
- 5. Find ways to make your life easier.** You may need to hire someone to do chores. Use organizing tools or use a dry-erase calendar. Be creative!



RESOLVE FACT SHEET SPOTLIGHT:**“Healthy Eating”**

Want to keep your stroke survivor’s blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight under control? Eating healthy can help. The USDA has swapped the food group pyramid for MyPlate, which emphasizes appropriate serving sizes of each food group during every meal. See proper portions from each food group in the MyPlate picture.



- **Choose healthy foods.** Stroke survivors and caregivers should eat properly portioned foods from each food group.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Water, fat-free/low-fat milk, and unsweetened tea are healthy choices.
- **Plan your meals.** Choosing what to eat in advance helps you prepare a healthy meal that stroke survivors can easily eat.

**RESOLVE FACT SHEET SPOTLIGHT:****“Spirituality and Health”**

Many stroke caregivers say living a spiritual life makes them feel healthier.

Below are some ways that caregivers take time for their spiritual well-being.

- **Prayer or meditation** can lower stress and improve caregivers’ health.
- **Volunteering** in the community helps caregivers put their problems in perspective. It can also give people a sense of purpose in life.
- **Going to church**, or other houses of worship, can help caregivers feel like they belong among other people who share similar beliefs.
- **Taking a walk** in nature can show caregivers how peaceful and beautiful the world can be.



Helpful Tools



The RESCUE website now has many helpful tools available for you to use.

Problem-Solving Module

Includes key components of traditional, problem-solving interventions and can be summarized by the acronym COPE (Creativity, Optimism, Planning, and Expert information). This module teaches caregivers how they can optimize their caregiving problem-solving skills.

Aphasia Card

Aphasia is the most common communication problem that affects stroke survivors. It can affect the survivor's ability to speak or understand what others are saying. This wallet-size Aphasia Card will help the stroke survivor in communicating their condition to others. This card explains what aphasia is and offers a helpful tip for communicating with the stroke survivor. There is a space on the back of the card for the caregiver's contact information in case of emergency.



Medication Card



Keeping track of medicines is important for maintaining a stroke survivor's health. It can also prevent medication errors. This wallet-size Medication Card will help stroke survivors keep an up-to-date list of their medicines with them at all times. In an emergency, having that information can help save a life.



Visit the RESCUE website at the following link to learn problem-solving strategies and download the Aphasia and Medication Cards.

<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue/tools>

