

Acute Stroke

Clinical Care Standard

Why this is needed

Considerable gains have been achieved in the care of people with acute stroke, however many people still do not receive guideline-recommended care.

The goal of this clinical care standard is to improve the early assessment and management of patients with acute and subacute stroke to increase their chance of survival, maximise their recovery and reduce their risk of another stroke.

1 Early assessment

A person with suspected stroke is immediately assessed at first contact using a validated stroke screening tool, such as the F.A.S.T. (Face, Arm, Speech and Time) test.

2 Time-critical therapy

A patient with ischaemic stroke for whom reperfusion treatment is clinically appropriate, and after brain imaging excludes haemorrhage, is offered a reperfusion treatment in accordance with the settings and time frames recommended in the *Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management*.¹

3 Stroke unit care

A patient with stroke is offered treatment in a stroke unit as defined in the [National Acute Stroke Services Framework](#).²

4 Early rehabilitation

A patient's rehabilitation needs and goals are assessed by staff trained in rehabilitation within 24–48 hours of admission to the stroke unit. Rehabilitation is started as soon as possible, depending on the patient's clinical condition and their preferences.

5 Minimising risk of another stroke

A patient with stroke, while in hospital, starts treatment and education to reduce their risk of another stroke.

6 Carer training and support

A carer of a patient with stroke is given practical training and support to enable them to provide care, support and assistance to a patient with stroke.

1. Stroke Foundation. Clinical guidelines for stroke management 2017. [Internet] Melbourne: Stroke Foundation; 2017
Available from: <https://informme.org.au/Guidelines/Clinical-Guidelines-for-Stroke-Management-2017>

2. National Stroke Foundation. National Acute Stroke Services Framework

Available from: <https://strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Treatment-programs/National-stroke-services-frameworks>

7 Transition from hospital care

Before a patient with stroke leaves the hospital, they are involved in the development of an individualised care plan that describes the ongoing care that the patient will require after they leave hospital. The plan includes rehabilitation goals, lifestyle modifications and medicines needed to manage risk factors, any equipment they need, follow-up appointments, and contact details for ongoing support services available in the community. This plan is provided to the patient before they leave hospital, and to their general practitioner or ongoing clinical provider within 48 hours of discharge.

Tools to support data collection for clinical quality improvement

Resources available to support clinical quality improvement in acute stroke include:

- the Australian Stroke Data Tool (AuSDaT): www.strokefoundation.org.au/Australian-Stroke-Coalition/AusDAT
- the Australian Stroke Clinical Registry (AuSCR): www.auscr.com.au
- the Stroke Foundation's National Stroke Audit: www.informme.org.au

Questions?

For more information, please visit:
www.safetyandquality.gov.au/ccs

You can also contact the Clinical Care Standards project team at: ccs@safetyandquality.gov.au

Disclaimer

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has produced this clinical care standard to support the delivery of appropriate care for a defined condition. The clinical care standard is based on the best evidence available at the time of development. Healthcare professionals are advised to use clinical discretion and consideration of the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian, when applying information contained within the clinical care standard. Consumers should use the information in the clinical care standard as a guide to inform discussions with their healthcare professional about the applicability of the clinical care standard to their individual condition.