



Disability Services

Information Sheet

Stroke: equipment to assist with daily living

Each person who has experienced a stroke is affected differently and the limitations they have as a result also vary. The person's physical impairment may vary from slight muscle weakness to paralysis and loss of sensation on one side of the body. This may affect mobility, coordination, balance and the ability to do two-handed activities.

Some people who have had a stroke may have difficulty with memory, planning tasks and problem solving. Some have communication problems affecting their ability to speak, to understand speech or to read and write.

All of these problems can affect a person's ability to independently perform self-care activities. The Occupational Therapists at the Independent Living Centre can assist with advice, techniques and equipment to help a person who has had a stroke to be more independent with their self-care activities.

Cutlery and plates

If the person can only use one hand, there is cutlery that combines the action of a fork and knife or a fork and spoon in one. Also, there are knives that use a rocker action that assists by keeping the food steady whilst it is being cut.

There are plates with rims, plates with a raised lip at one end and deep plates with a central channel that enable a person with the use of one hand to push food against a barrier and get it onto their fork or spoon. You can also get plate guards that attach to your existing plate and give you an edge to push against.

If the person can use the hand on their affected side but the strength of their grip is reduced, cutlery with a built-up handle may enable them to eat using cutlery in both hands.

Slip-resistant mats placed under plates and bowls keep them still when eating.

Kitchen and household aids

A kettle or jug tipper holds a kettle or jug in its frame and allows the user to tip it forward one-handed with reduced effort, causing the liquid to pour into the cup placed underneath the spout. It eliminates the need to carry a kettle with boiling water over to a cup. A suction bottle brush can be placed in the sink to enable a person to wash glasses and cups one-handed. A tray mobile can be used to move or carry objects around a room.

Meal preparation

A chopping board with spikes can be used to stabilise vegetables for chopping and slicing. There is a chopping board with a knife attached at the knife's tip that pivots to assist chopping.

Boards are available with graters and peelers attached that allow one-handed use. A board with a right-angled edge stabilises the bread when spreading. A vegetable peeler that clamps to the bench enables one-handed peeling. Rolling garlic in a one-handed garlic peeler easily removes the garlic peel. There are vegetable choppers and food processors that can be operated one-handed. Buying pre-cut, pre-peeled or sliced vegetables can eliminate the need for cutting and peeling.

Saucepan stabilisers keep the handle still to stop saucepans rotating whilst stirring them one-handed on the stove.

There is a clamp for jars or bottles that is held secure with your body enabling you to open the jar or bottle one-handed. A jar opener that attaches to the underside of a cupboard can enable a jar to be opened one-handed. A range of jar and bottle openers are also on display. There is a can opener with a stand on which to place the can which is then wound to the correct height to assist with one-handed use.

Some hints for meal preparation are to stabilise a bowl with a wet face washer or slip-resistant mat, or use the plughole to stabilise eggs or oranges for peeling. A bowl can be stabilised in a board with a round cut-out section.

Electric can openers are often the easiest way to open cans. Before buying, consider the height of the electric can opener, the force needed to puncture the can and whether the lever remains down automatically once lowered.

An electric knife may make cutting bread or carving roasts easier.

Dressing

A range of dressing hooks is available to assist with pulling and pushing clothing.

A button hook can help with buttons and shirt cuffs can be adapted.

Shoes are easier to get on if they do up with hook and loop fastenings, for example Velcro or coiled shoe laces can be used.

Bras with no fastenings or bras with front opening may be easier to put on. A bra can be adapted to be front opening and have Velcro threaded through a D ring at the front to secure it. A range of adapted clothing is on display that includes items with elastic waists, front opening, and secured by Velcro. There is an aid that secures one side of the bra in front of you to allow the other end to be brought around the body and attached.

A range of dressing techniques can be provided on dressing one-handed. These include putting on a bra, shirt/blouse, jumper/top, socks, tying shoe laces and knotting a tie and tie adaptations.

Personal care

Dentures can be cleaned one-handed when the denture brush is on suction cups. Nail clippers are also available on suction cups. Toothpaste dispensers that can be attached to the wall enable a person to dispense toothpaste one-handed. A pill cutter is useful for enabling pills to be cut with one hand.

Bathing

When a person's stability or balance has been affected, grab rails on the walls and a shower chair to sit on in the shower are often recommended. If the shower is above the bath, a bath board and a shower hose may be necessary.

Information on slip-resistant flooring is available.

Wrapping up in a towelling dressing gown to dry can assist with drying.

There are tap sensors that regulate water flow without the need to physically turn taps and liquid sensor dispensers for hand wash, hand sanitisers and shampoos.

Toileting

A commode chair next to the bed can assist a person who has mobility problems, especially when they awake during the night and need to go to the toilet urgently. A raised toilet seat with armrests can assist a person getting off the toilet if it is too low.

The Registered Nurse at the Continence Resource Centre situated at the Independent Living Centre can assist with continence enquiries and equipment.

Telephones

Hands-free operation on standard telephones, cordless telephones and telephone headsets mean that the user does not need to hold the receiver.

Mobility aids

Four-wheeled, folding walkers with a seat can be modified to have a brake that can be operated by one hand. There are manual wheelchairs that are designed for one-arm use. Alternatively, there are manual wheelchairs that have a lower than usual floor to seat height to enable the person to use one foot to propel themselves in addition to using one arm.

Most scooters and all powered wheelchairs can be operated one-handed.

Recreation

There are a variety of aids to assist someone using one hand that include a needle threader, knitting, crochet and embroidery aids, card holders and a card shuffler, book holders and fishing aids.

Vehicle adaptations and access

Information can be given on who implements driver assessment and training for people who have had a stroke. There is also information on modified hand controls and automatic car seat adaptation that enables the car seat to swivel.

We can demonstrate aids to assist getting out of a car that include swivel cushions, a strap for the door frame and a removable lever to lean on.

Contacting the Independent Living Centre

For further information or to make an appointment to visit the display please contact the Independent Living Centre. The Independent Living Centre offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help you with everyday tasks.

Independent Living Centre
11 Blacks Road
Gilles Plains SA 5086

Phone: 1300 885 886 (SA & NT callers only) or 8266 5260

Fax: 8266 5263

Email: ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au

Website: www.sa.gov.au/disability/ilc

Accessible off street parking is available.

Bus routes:

From the city T500/T501 or
207/208 to Stop 28 Sudholz Road

Timetable information: 8210 1000

