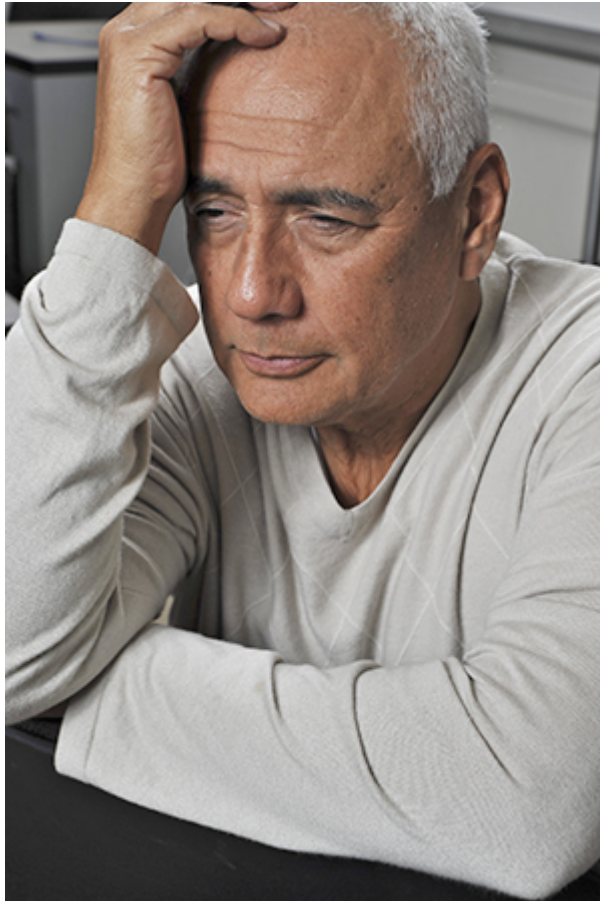


# Mood Swings and Depression After a Stroke



After a stroke, a person may feel sudden or extreme emotions. Sadness and depression are common. These feelings may be due to damage in the brain. Or they may be a response to the person's awareness of what has happened.



## Coping with mood swings

One common effect of stroke is lability. This problem makes people less able to control their emotions. Lability may cause a sudden mood shift that is out of context with what is going on. A person may suddenly cry or laugh.

## You can help

- Stay calm. Accept the behavior and go on with what you were doing.
- If the person apologizes, acknowledge the behavior as a result of the stroke.
- Don't criticize.
- Treat the person with respect at all times.

## Dealing with depression

A person may feel depressed after having a stroke. This may be due to brain damage. Changes in body image and grieving for lost skills, such as speech or freedom of movement, may also cause depression.

## You can help

- Ask the healthcare provider whether medicine can help reduce the depression. You may need to take your loved one to see a psychiatrist or psychologist if they have severe depression.
- Help the person stay active. Play games, watch TV, take a walk, or listen to music together.
- Ask friends to visit if the person is willing to see them.
- Don't discount depression by telling the person to "cheer up."

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