

What you can do

✓ Exercise

Physical activity makes more blood flow to your brain and improves your thinking skills.

✓ Eat a healthy diet

What you eat affects your brain and thinking skills.

✓ Get enough sleep

Sleep helps your brain make memories. It also helps you learn new information.

✓ Challenge your brain

By challenging your brain, you can build new connections in your brain and improve your cognition. Try new puzzles, learn a new skill, or plan projects and activities.



If you have questions, please ask your health care provider.

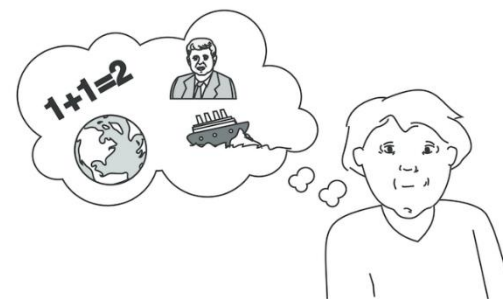
To find more information go to:

The Heart and Stroke
Foundation of Canada
Heartandstroke.ca

After Stroke BC
strokerecoverybc.ca

You and Your Brain –
Understanding Cognition
patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Changes in Cognition After a Stroke



www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice
given to you by your healthcare provider.

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For more copies: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Cognition and stroke

Damage to the brain after a stroke can affect your thinking skills or “cognition.”

Cognition is not how smart you are. It is the set of thinking skills that you need to plan and carry out the things you do every day.

We use cognition in many ways, including the following:

- personal care
- managing medications
- cooking
- shopping
- finding places
- working or volunteering
- managing money
- communicating

You can have problems with cognition no matter what area of your brain your stroke was.

Like your muscles, you can rebuild and strengthen the connections in your brain. This will improve your thinking skills.

Common challenges with cognition

Challenge	Problem	What you can do
attention	concentrating	✓ go to a quiet space ✓ do one step at a time
orientation	being aware of time, where you are, and finding places	✓ use a calendar ✓ have a daily routine
processing speed	having enough time to understand information	✓ ask people to slow down ✓ practice activities to improve your processing speed
memory	remembering information, what you have done, and new skills	✓ write information ✓ learn and use memory strategies write lists and notes to yourself, and use a calendar ✓ visualize things you want to remember
sequencing	doing tasks in the correct order	✓ break the task into short steps ✓ use notes ✓ practice the task you want to improve
insight and judgement	understanding limits and what you can do safely	✓ talk about concerns with your health care team ✓ put reminders around your room
impulsivity	acting quickly and without thinking	✓ slow down ✓ ask for instructions ✓ take your time
problem-solving and planning	recognizing a problem, finding a solution, and planning for the future	✓ break the problem into smaller parts ✓ think of new solutions, ask for help
cognitive fatigue	having enough energy when using thinking skills	✓ conserve energy ✓ reduce distractions