



# Positioning in a Chair/ Wheelchair After Stroke

After a stroke, a person's ability to move and position themselves can be difficult. This may increase their risk for falls or injury.

## What you should know

- ✓ Many persons with stroke may experience pain and changes in muscle tone. Development of shoulder and arm pain is common. The arm should always be well supported while sitting to help prevent pain (See Smart Tips for Stroke Care - Hemiplegic Arm and Hand After Stroke)
- ✓ Proper positioning with use of equipment specific to the needs of the person will increase comfort and safety
- ✓ A stroke can cause a lack of sensation on one side of the body, so it is important to monitor the person's skin for signs of breakdown. Skin breakdown can happen when the person cannot feel pressure, wetness, temperature and the effects of pain
- ✓ After a stroke, the person's sense of where their body is in space (because of neglect, decreased awareness etc.) can result in poor positioning of arms, legs and trunk/torso
- ✓ After a stroke, the trunk/torso and one side of the body can be weaker (i.e. hemiplegia) which can make it difficult to stay centred and in the best sitting position

## Smart Tips - Always follow the care plan!

### Before You Start



- Make sure the person is wearing safe and suitable footwear that will not slip off
- Confirm you have the needed equipment (e.g. lap tray, footrest, seatbelt) available and ready to apply and that the seat is clear
- Be sure that the chair/wheelchair is in good working order, the brakes are on, and if required, footrests are attached as indicated

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### Once In The Chair/Wheelchair



- Be sure the hips are all the way back in the centre of the chair and that knees, and hips are level
- The trunk/torso should be centred
- Check that the feet are flat and directly under the knees and safely placed on the floor or footrest(s)
- Make sure that the affected arm is well supported (i.e. use of pillows or positioning devices as recommended). The arm should be slightly away from the person's side with the hand forward and palm down
- Before you leave, ensure that the person is well supported and comfortable. Do frequent checks to make sure they remain properly positioned

## Seek extra support

- ✓ Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists are experts in proper sitting and positioning. It may be helpful to involve them in the person's care. There are many options to customize the seating system and help is available