

## Stroke—what women need to know

You may not realize that stroke is very much a women's issue. But the facts bear that out:

- Strokes are more likely to be fatal in women than in men.
- In one national sample, the number of strokes among middle-aged women nearly tripled in the past decade. Not all of the reasons for that are clear, but some experts believe the rise in obesity is a contributing factor.
- Women are also involved with stroke as caregivers. Up to 75 percent of the nation's caregivers of stroke survivors are women.

Perhaps the most important fact of all: **Up to 80 percent of strokes are avoidable—in women and men.**

difficulty breathing, and had undergone a tracheotomy. Chances of a full recovery seemed slim. Prayers from family and friends sustained the couple, who are residents of the small community of Frost in Navarro County. Modest therapy brought small improvements but not much response from Jo Ann. Transferred to another medical facility, she still lay mostly unresponsive. Medication and therapy continued, and on Dec. 20, she woke up—weak—with no feeling on her left side.

### 'Miracles do happen'

In mid-January, she was transferred to Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital, where the first few days saw little improvement, but optimism finally took hold.

"Miracles do happen," Robert Hill says. "The professional staff, medications, prayers of family and friends, daily stimulation exercises—it all paid off." She began eating again and received therapy from a speech pathologist. Her awareness sharpened, and her physical presence improved. The nurses encouraged her and guided her with

### The power of prevention

To head off a potentially deadly or disabling stroke:

**Keep your blood pressure in check.** Elevated blood pressure is a top risk factor for stroke. Follow your doctor's advice to control blood pressure with lifestyle changes and—if needed—medications.

**Watch your weight.** Extra pounds (especially if you carry them around the middle) increase your stroke risk.

**Move more.** Exercising regularly also reduces stroke risk.

**Become informed.** Learn more about preventing stroke at [www.methodisthealthsystem.org](http://www.methodisthealthsystem.org).

Sources: American Heart Association; National Stroke Association

kindness and care.

Progress continued as she asked questions, recalled events, visited with those around her, and increased her movements. Jo Ann worked every day of the week on her recovery, her husband says proudly.

"She worked at night while in her bed, in the gym, walked the halls with support, then without a crutch or walker," he says. It was a long way from a coma; respiratory failure; and loss of the ability to walk, talk, or eat.

### A team effort

The Hills give a strong measure of the credit for her remarkable recovery to her medical team. But they know the road to recovery is a team effort.

"Through faith, love, and care from friends and family; the service of dedicated and well-trained medical professionals; and her own unique character, she is dramatically continuing to recover," Robert Hill says, beaming with pride.

She is taking back her life. ←

**In it together.** Married for 45 years, Robert and Jo Ann Hill have faced life's challenges together. With the help of Methodist Health System's medical professionals, they've shared a journey back from Jo Ann's debilitating stroke.



## Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital Rehab your way

"Our goal is to educate people about the benefits and the impact of acute rehabilitation," says Shari Moore, director of business development, Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital. "Many people are unaware of what acute rehabilitation is until they find themselves in need of it."

Acute rehabilitation hospitals provide physical, occupational, and speech therapy with a level of expertise, compassion, and dignity like no other. They guide the physical and emotional journey it takes to regain one's life.

Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital is a 40-bed facility that offers specialized care to patients recovering from strokes; brain and spinal cord injuries; multi-trauma, neurological disorders; cardiopulmonary procedures; and complex orthopedic surgeries such as amputations, hip fractures, and joint replacements.

Amenities at the 48,000-square-foot facility include a therapeutic pool, a therapy gym with the latest rehabilitative equipment, a therapy courtyard, indoor and outdoor dining and recreational areas, and training suites in which patients can practice the activities of daily living.

Patients are under the care of specialists who provide nursing care; physical, occupational, and respiratory therapy; speech-language pathology; nutrition counseling; and case management. The hospital is the only one of its kind in the southwest Dallas area.

Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital is at 3020 W. Wheatland Road in Dallas. Call **972-708-8600** or visit [www.methodisthealthsystem.org](http://www.methodisthealthsystem.org) for more information. ←

Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital is an independent, legal entity separate from Methodist Health System, Methodist Dallas Medical Center, Methodist Charlton Medical Center, Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, Methodist Richardson Medical Center, and Methodist Hospitals of Dallas.