

Are you Experiencing **SPASTICITY**

What is **SPASTICITY?**

Spasticity is one of the most common post-stroke conditions a stroke survivor can experience. If left untreated spasticity can cause bone and joint deformities that are painful and debilitating. If not well-managed and worsens, it can lead to the need for full-time institutionalized care. Unfortunately, more than half of all stroke survivors do not seek assistance for this condition.

A stroke can damage the brain, which can prevent successful communication between the brain and the muscles. Muscles do not receive the message to relax which can lead to severe muscle spasms or uncontrollable muscle contractions, resembling severe charley horses. For example, a tight fist, with a bent wrist and elbow and/or arm pressed against the chest is commonly seen. Spasticity in the legs and feet can cause stiffness in the knees, a pointed foot and/or curling of the toes. Muscle spasms may cause restricted balance, coordination, and muscle movement and decrease the overall quality of life.

Stroke and **SPASTICITY**

Treatment/ **MANAGEMENT**

Fortunately, there are ways to treat and manage the symptoms of spasticity. The first line of defense is daily muscle stretching and range of motion exercises. This can be accomplished with regular visits to an occupational and/or physical therapist. Along with daily stretching, some people experience relief using oral medications and/or botulinum toxin and/or phenol injections. If these treatments alone or in combination are not helpful, talk to your healthcare provider about intrathecal baclofen pump therapy or possible surgical options.