

# How Long Until You Can Fly After Stroke?

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*How long until you can fly after stroke? What medical conditions make it unsafe to fly? What's the risk of stroke on an airplane?*

These are all pressing questions for people who have recently experienced a stroke. If you're interested in flying after stroke but don't know how to safely do so, this article is for you. We'll answer all those questions and more.

## When Can You Fly After Stroke?

Flying is not safe *until your condition has stabilized* and your medical team agrees that it's safe to fly. The general guidelines for flying after stroke is to wait at least two weeks. If you had a TIA (a "mini stroke") then you might only need to wait a minimum of 3 days. If you had a massive stroke, then you might need to wait at least 3 months.

Only your medical practitioner who is familiar with your unique circumstances (because no two strokes are alike) can advise on exactly how long you should wait until you can fly after stroke. So be sure to ask your medical team for their opinion.

## Can Flying Cause a Stroke?

Flying after stroke can cause anxiety about having another stroke while in the air. Luckily, the process of flying is *very unlikely* to cause a stroke. According to the research, the number of strokes

occurring on commercial flights is very low. There's only a one in a million chance that you will have a stroke on a plane – and that fact is [backed by science](#).

It can still be nerve wracking to be in a plane without access to emergency medical services after stroke. But perhaps it will ease your mind knowing that there's a greater chance of being struck by lightning than having a stroke while flying. That being said, it's still important to be aware of all the other risks and complications involved with flying after stroke.

## Risk of Ischemic Stroke on a Plane

The risk of stroke on a plane goes up if you have a condition known as hypercoagulability, which increases your tendency to form blood clots. Since ischemic stroke is caused by a blood clot to the brain, and airplanes require you to sit for a long period of time, it can increase your chance of ischemic stroke. So if you have hypercoagulability, avoid flying after stroke, and consult with your doctor about when it's safe to fly.

## Risk of Hemorrhagic Stroke on a Plane

Also, if you have high blood pressure, then it's best to wait until you're comfortable with airports and flying. Since flying can be a stressful situation for some people, it can really raise your blood pressure, which is a serious hemorrhagic stroke risk factor. So, if you're the kind of person who is easily stressed out by airports and you have a history of hemorrhagic stroke, then you should wait until your condition has improved before you attempt to fly.

## How to Accommodate Movement Limitations When Flying After Stroke

Once your doctor says it's okay to fly, the next step is to prepare for your flight. Most stroke survivors are still recovering from movement impairments after their stroke, which can make navigating an airport tricky.

Luckily, there are many services available to help you out. For example, there are services that can help you get to your gate, board the plane, deplane, and get to your seat. There are also ways to accommodate flying in a wheelchair.

You can book these services when you book your flight. Be sure to accommodate your needs before you get your ticket! Airlines have complicated rules about flying with disability, so it's best to sort it out before you put your money down.

For the specifics, see [this list of disability policies for all major airlines](#).

## Other Precautions for Flying After Stroke

While movement impairments are the most common stroke side effect, it's not the only one that can interfere with your ability to fly after stroke. Difficulty with speech (like aphasia), impaired vision, and poor spatial perception can impair your ability to correctly navigate an airport.

If the idea of travelling through an airport alone makes you really nervous, then listen to your instincts! Be sure to travel with a companion or hire extra for help from airline personnel.

If your communication and navigation skills are still strong, then you should be able to get through an airport safely with lots of preplanning.

## Should You Fly After Stroke?

Now you understand exactly how stroke affects your ability to fly.

If you're still unsure whether or not you can fly, check with your doctor as (s)he is familiar with your unique condition and can recommend a safe timeline for you.

If you have been cleared for flying, make sure that you do plenty of preplanning. Make sure that you know how to navigate the airport and that you've paid for any extra assistive services that you may need.

Once you've done all of that, take a deep breath and get excited about all the places you can go!