

## Stroke Patient Care: Where Do I Start?

- **Perform Neuro checks as ordered and assess:**

- Level of Consciousness using GCS
  - Is the pt. keenly responsive? Do they require painful stimuli to respond?
- Speech and language
  - Is there slurring of speech? Trouble getting words out? Nonsensical speech?
- Pupillary reaction
- Facial symmetry
  - Ask pt. to smile, show teeth, raise eyebrows, close eyes
- Grip strength
- Limb strength and sensation
  - Can use pinprick or noxious stimuli to test sensation

- **Keep pt.'s presenting symptoms in mind when assessing!**

- Is the pt. weaker now? Is there new numbness or tingling?
- Notify provider immediately for any changes in the neuro assessment

- **NIHSS → Intervals are: on admission, change in level of care, 24hr post-intervention, change in neuro status, and discharge**

- If you are not certified in performing an NIHSS you can call the Stroke Service Educator on Vocera (Jessica Tambe) or one of the neuroscience floor charge nurses (51600 x54016 or 53600 x55644)

- **Perform Vital Signs as ordered**

- **Blood Pressure**
  - Follow blood pressure parameters and targets
  - If BP is outside of parameters/target notify provider and treat per provider orders
  - Be aware that hypertension and hypotension can cause concerns for stroke patients

- **Intake and Output**

- Is your pt. voiding spontaneously? Assess for urinary retention
  - **Bladder scan as needed**
- Is your pt. having regular bowel movements?
- Does your pt. have adequate PO intake?

- **Mobilizing**

- Physical Therapy will help with guidance in best ways to ambulate the pt.
- Some pt.'s may experience dizziness and unsteady gait
  - Monitor need for assistance in ambulation
- Prevent immobility issues
  - Perform Braden scale in assessment
  - Regular turning and positioning
  - Do not pull on affected arm during repositioning
  - Encourage OOB and mobilization for safety

- **Complications to Keep an eye out for**

- DVT → IPCs or chemoprophylaxis if indicated, Asp PNA → Dysphagia screening, may need feeding assistance, UTI, Constipation, Hemorrhage → monitor for new N/V