

Rehabilitation

Key to Successful Stroke Recovery

One afternoon, Lakewood resident Anita Crooks began feeling strange but couldn't quite explain why. The 46-year-old suddenly became weak and was unable to stand. Anita's husband, David, realized something was wrong and called 911. Anita was diagnosed with a stroke at Ocean Medical Center and was transferred to Jersey Shore University Medical Center for treatment.

"Anita's stroke was a hemorrhagic stroke," explains Alan Deutsch, D.O., Anita's neurologist at Jersey Shore. "Unlike the much more common ischemic stroke, which occurs when a clot reduces blood supply to the brain, a hemorrhagic stroke is caused by bleeding in the brain itself."

Anita stayed in the Intensive Care Unit at Jersey Shore for 14 days. From there, she enrolled in inpatient rehabilitation at Shore Rehabilitation Institute (SRI), located at Ocean Medical Center, to begin her journey to recovery.

Focused, Intense Therapy

"Where you go for rehabilitation can make a big difference in your



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A devastating stroke left Anita Crooks unable to walk or use her left arm. The support of her family — including husband David, son Deion, and daughter Tiffany — and the therapy at Shore Rehabilitation Institute helped her regain much of her movement.

recovery," explains Talya Fleming, M.D., a physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor at SRI. "Inpatient rehab is very intensive, requiring at least three hours of rehabilitation a day."

For Anita, it was the right fit. Her stroke had left her with severe physical problems, including paralysis on her left side. She was confined to a wheelchair and could not use her left arm or hand even for simple tasks, such as picking up a glass and taking a drink.

At SRI, Anita received physical therapy along with occupational therapy, which focuses on upper-body functioning, and speech therapy, which helps patients with communication, memory, and swallowing problems.

High-Tech Treatment

Her recovery was also aided by technology. "Anita's tailored treatment

plan also involved the use of a specialized brace called the SaeboFlex," says Dr. Fleming. "It helps people who have weakness in their hands. By using this technology, Anita was able to practice flexing her hand. Eventually, her brain relearned this motion until she could do it on her own."

Anita spent three weeks in inpatient rehabilitation at SRI and then continued to receive therapy on an outpatient basis. Although she is still in the process of regaining full function on her left side, Anita can now walk on her own with a cane and is back to work.

"I just can't say enough about my doctors and therapists at SRI," she says. "They held back nothing to help me. It wasn't just their job; they were truly there for me. They helped me push to do more, to reach my fullest potential." ●

Did You Know? Meridian Neuroscience is home to five nationally accredited Primary Stroke Centers. Meridian Transfer Center connects these centers to the region's only Stroke Rescue Center, found at Jersey Shore University Medical Center. Learn more at MeridianNeuroscience.com.