

Stroke survivors using mail order pharmacies more likely to take meds

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Stroke survivors who get medications by mail are more likely to take them as directed than patients who get medications from local pharmacies, according to research presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2016.

Provided by American Heart Association

Researchers studied the prescription refill records of patients discharged with ischemic, or clot-caused, stroke from 24 hospitals who received new anticoagulant and cholesterol-lowering medications between 2006 and 2015. These medications help prevent a subsequent stroke.

A total of 48,746 patients refilled one of those medications, including 205,085 prescriptions for statins (136,722 by pharmacy and 68,363 by mail) and 50,483 prescriptions for anticoagulants (34,682 by pharmacy and 15,801 by mail).

Researchers found:

- Overall, patients who picked up their medications from local pharmacies were adherent about 47 percent of the time. Patients who had their medications mailed to them were adherent almost 74 percent of the time.
- Those who only used local pharmacies were 56.4 percent adherent to their prescriptions for cholesterol-lowering statins, while [patients](#) who received medications by mail were nearly 88 percent adherent.
- Among those taking anticoagulants, adherence was about 45 percent for those using their local pharmacies versus 56 percent for mail order customers.

Future research should study the impact of mail-order pharmacy use on [stroke prevention](#) and vascular health after stroke, researchers said.

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