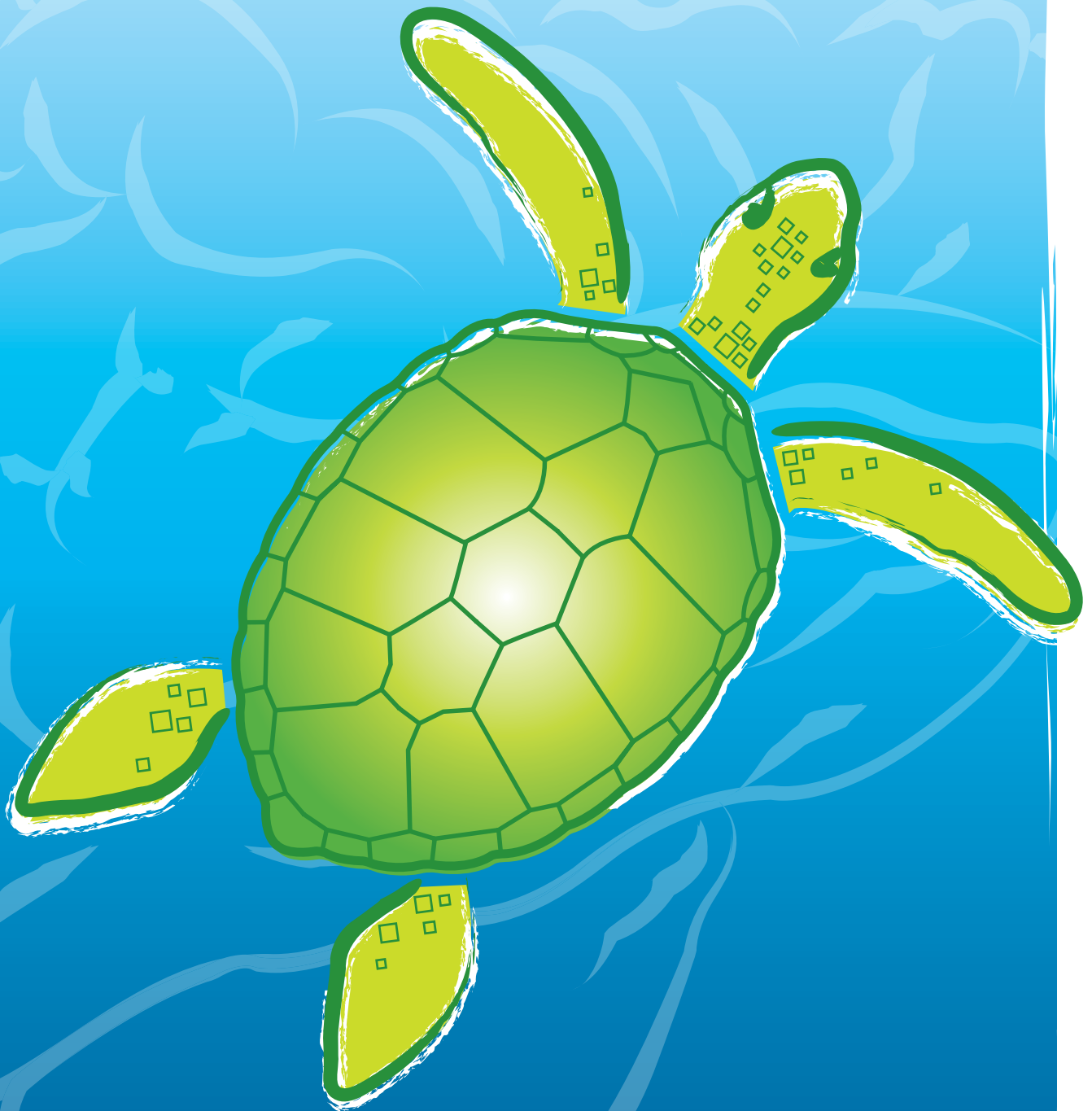




strokefoundation

Journey **After** Stroke



Queensland Government



About the National Stroke Foundation

The National Stroke Foundation is the only national not-for-profit organisation that works with stroke survivors, carers, health professionals, government and the public to reduce the impact of stroke on the Australian community. Our mission is to stop stroke, save lives and end suffering. We are the voice of stroke in Australia.

We will achieve this by:

- Raising awareness about the risk factors and signs of stroke and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Improving treatment for stroke to save lives and reduce disability.
- Improving life after stroke for stroke survivors.
- Encouraging and facilitating stroke research.
- Raising funds from the community, corporate sector and government to continue our mission.

Visit www.strokefoundation.com.au for more information.

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Inquiries to adapt this material should be addressed by email to: ip_officer@health.qld.gov.au or by mail to:
The IP Officer, Office of Health and Medical Research, Queensland Health, GPO Box 48, BRISBANE 4001.

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My Story - Journey After Stroke

When I got up in the morning I felt funny on one side, and I was wobbly... trying to walk. I didn't know what it was... I was numb... But ah... my niece she said "What's wrong Aunty J??..." She reckoned you got to go to the hospital. My heart was aching and I rang the ambulance... the ambulance they took me to hospital. They said that I had a stroke and a slight heart attack. I was frightened that I might have that, a bad case of the stroke.

Then I stayed in there, in hospital for a week. I had to exercise... I had to go walking... and they gave me tablets... two new tablets.

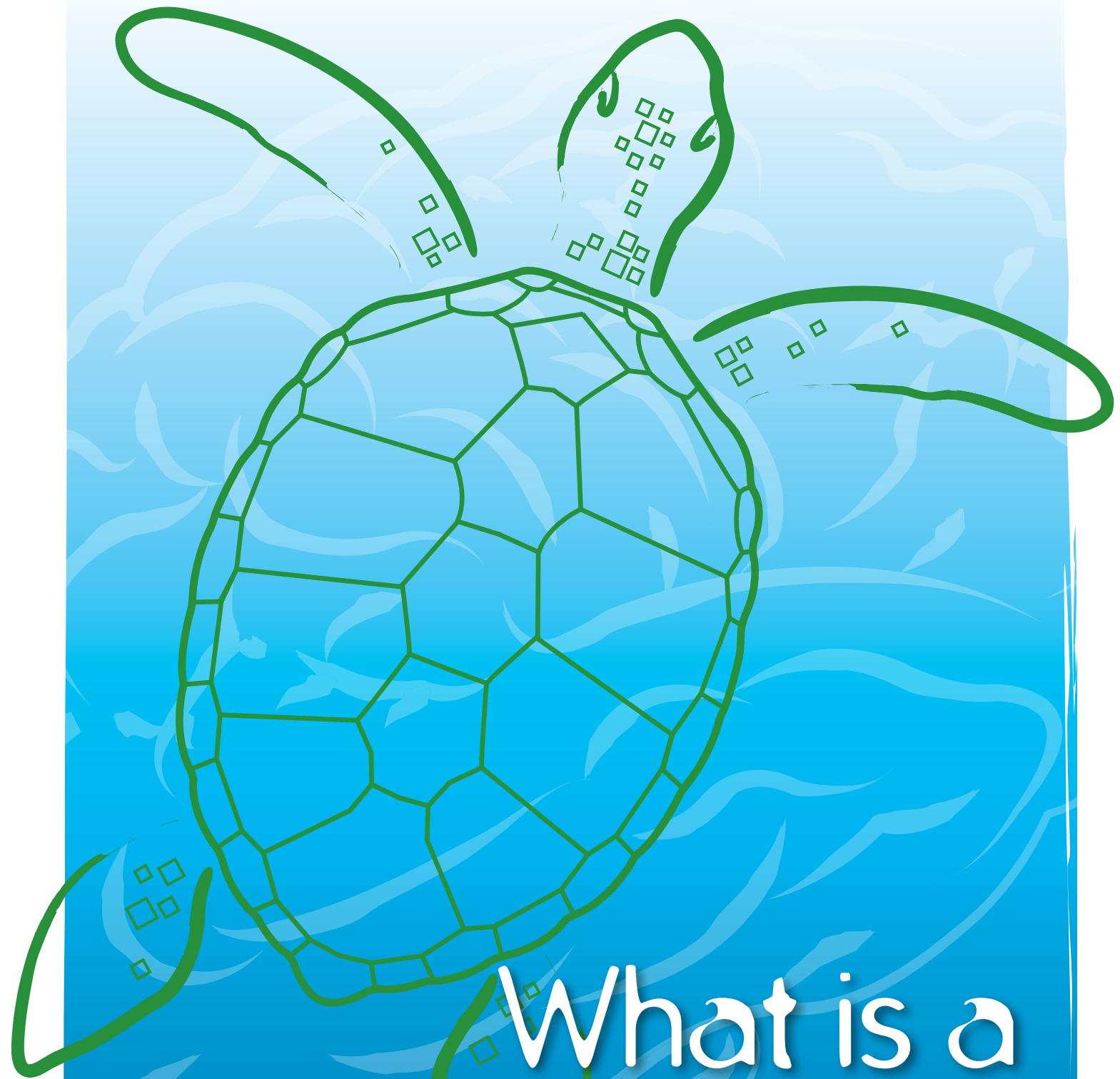
My niece helped me for like 3 weeks, then I went home to my own place, and my other niece... she helped me too... and, I couldn't hardly hang clothes out cos my arm... my left arm... was a bit weak... lifting it up... you know? I'm frightened if I wipe plates up cos I might smash the plates. I just let it dry or wash it with one hand.

I couldn't hardly walk... but I'm walking by myself now. I live on top of the hill and I get a lift down cos I am frightened that I might trip and I might roll down the hill!! (laugh)

Female stroke survivor from Palm Island

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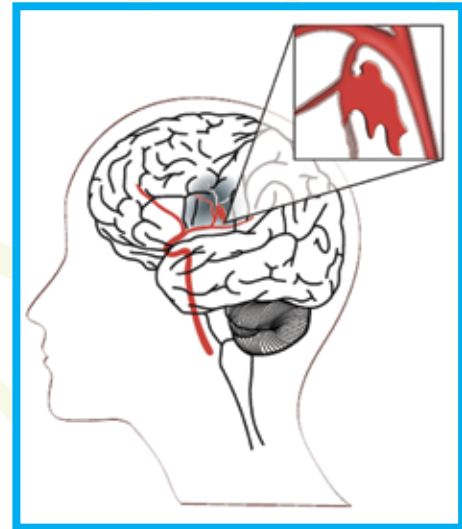
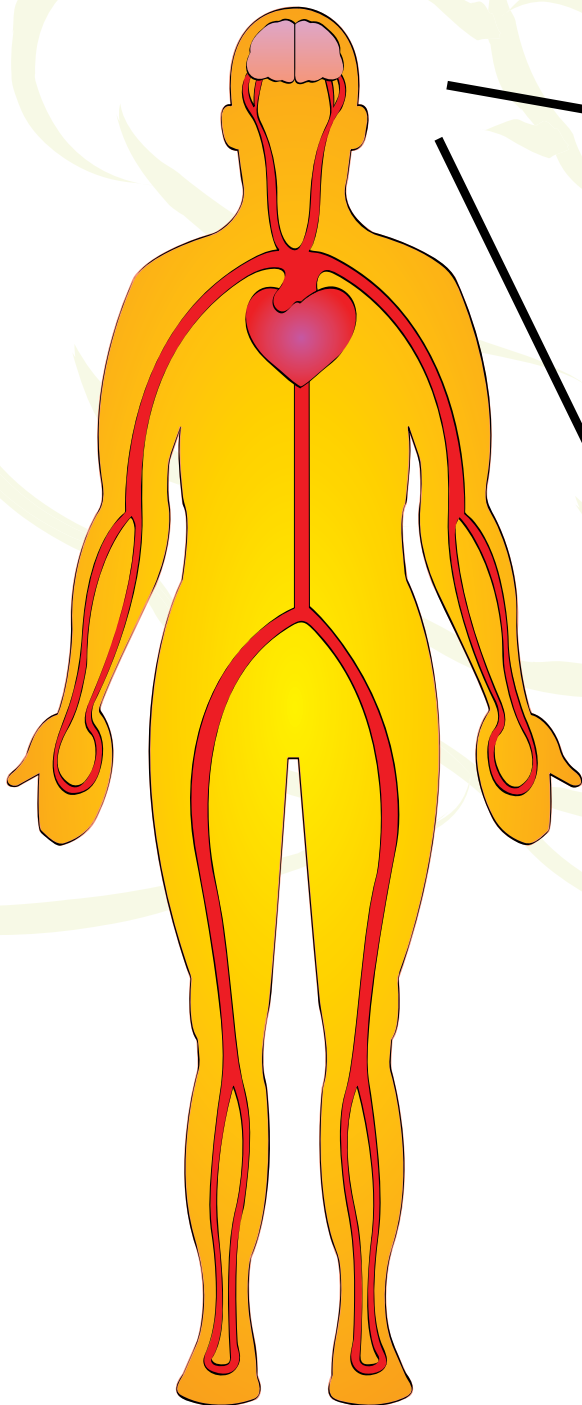
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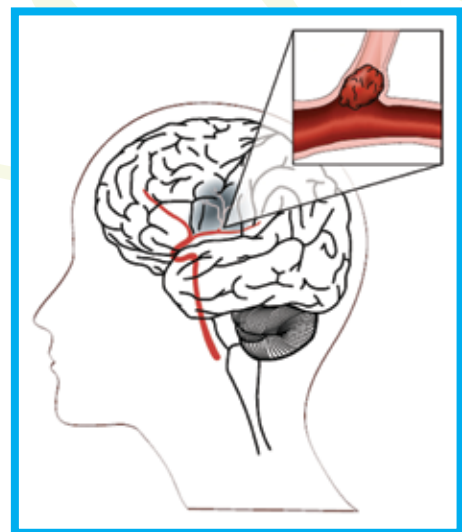
What is a stroke?

What is a stroke?

A stroke is a bursting or blockage of a blood vessel in the brain. When this happens, blood doesn't travel to all parts of the brain, so these parts can be damaged or die.



Bleed in brain



Blocked artery

How do I know I am having a stroke?

- Sudden feeling of weak arm, leg or face
- Dizziness and losing your balance
 - Talking funny
- Dribbling food and coughing when eating or drinking
 - Can't see properly



Stroke is serious.
Get help quickly.
CALL 000.



"Did you hear that Peter had a stroke?"

"Is he ok?"




"Well he's pretty sick; he can't talk, walk, and has problems remembering things."

"Where is he now?"

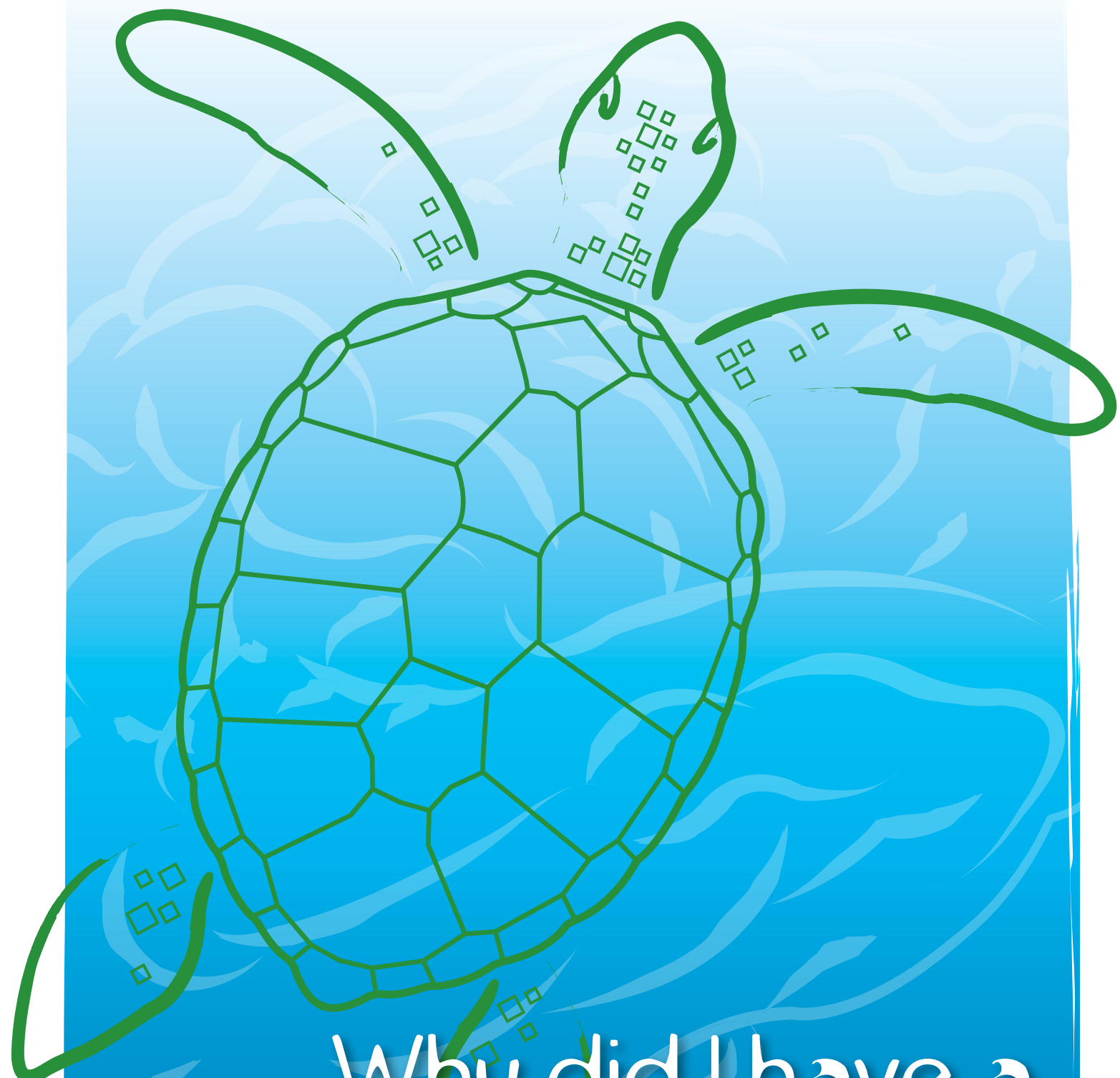
"He's in hospital getting better."

How do you know if someone's having a *stroke*? Think...

F.A.S.T.

 <p>FACE Check their FACE. Has their mouth drooped?</p>	 <p>A RMS Can they lift both ARMS?</p>	 <p>S PEECH Is their SPEECH slurred? Do they understand you?</p>	 <p>T I ME TIME is critical. If you see any of these signs, call 000 now!</p>
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Think F.A.S.T. Act FAST! CALL 000



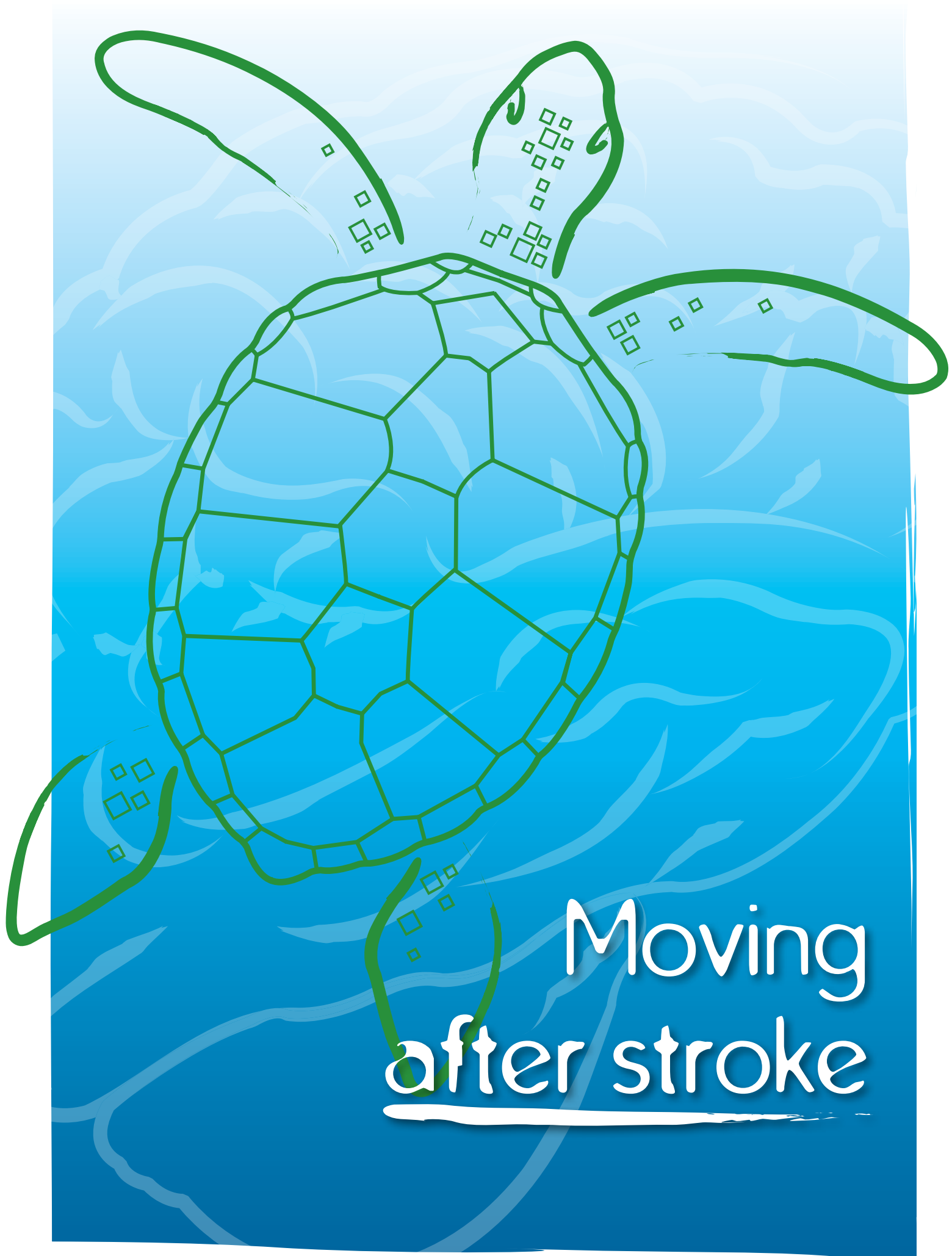
Why did I have a
stroke?

I am more likely to have a stroke if I:

- Smoke
- Am overweight
- Have high blood pressure (hypertension)
- Drink too much grog
- Have heart problems
- Have diabetes
- Have someone in my family who has had a stroke
- Have kidney problems

Will I get better after having a stroke?

- **Every stroke is different**
- **Most people get a lot better**
- **Some people take longer**
- **Some people may not recover**
- **Your health team can help**



Moving after stroke

After a stroke:

- Your leg and arm may be weak or not move at all
 - You may not feel your leg or arm
 - You may ignore or bump into things


Your health team can help you with:

- Getting in or out of bed
 - Sitting in a chair
 - Walking
 - Getting dressed
 - Eating and drinking



Starting exercises **EARLY** after a stroke is good

- You are more likely to get strong in the first few months after a stroke
 - This is when you need to work hard
- Your health worker will give you the right exercises to do



To get better at moving you
need to practice the right way.

Lots of practice
is the way to go.

Train your brain

- You need to teach your brain how to move your arm and/or leg again

Some exercises could be:

Sit to stand practice



Feet firmly on ground



Lean head and body over knees



Push through legs, no hands



Stand tall, keep your balance

Balance exercises



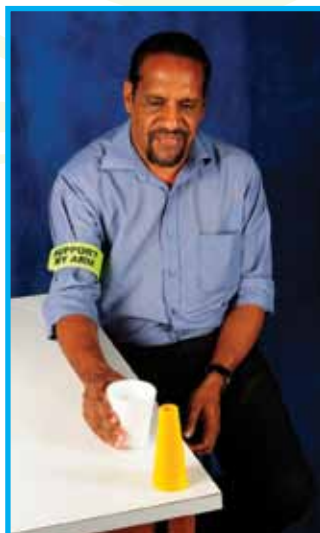
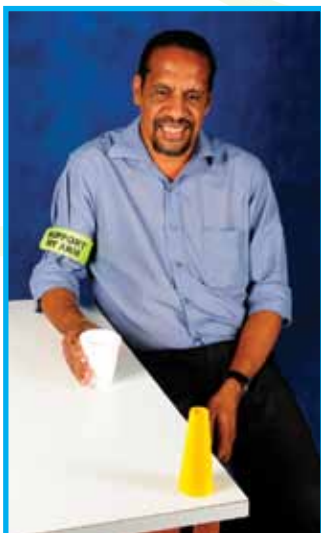
You need to look after your weak arm

- Shoulders can get sore if you don't support them



Practicing using your arm

- Exercise may help to get your arm stronger



Your health worker will give you a sling if you need it

Equipment can help



Bath transfer bench

To get into and out of your bath



Over toilet frame

To get on and off the toilet



Foot splint

To help with standing and walking



Wheelchair

To help when you can't walk far

- Your health team will help you to decide what you need



Food & drink

Why am I having difficulty eating and drinking?

Some people have difficulty eating and drinking after a stroke.

Sometimes food can go into your lungs instead of your belly.

Your health team will help you to choose and advise how to eat food and drink safely.

Sit up before you eat or drink.



Other things you can do:

- Take small mouthfuls
- Eat mushy food
- Make drinks thicker
- Some people need a feeding tube

If you cough when eating, get help.

After a stroke your eating
and drinking will usually get better.

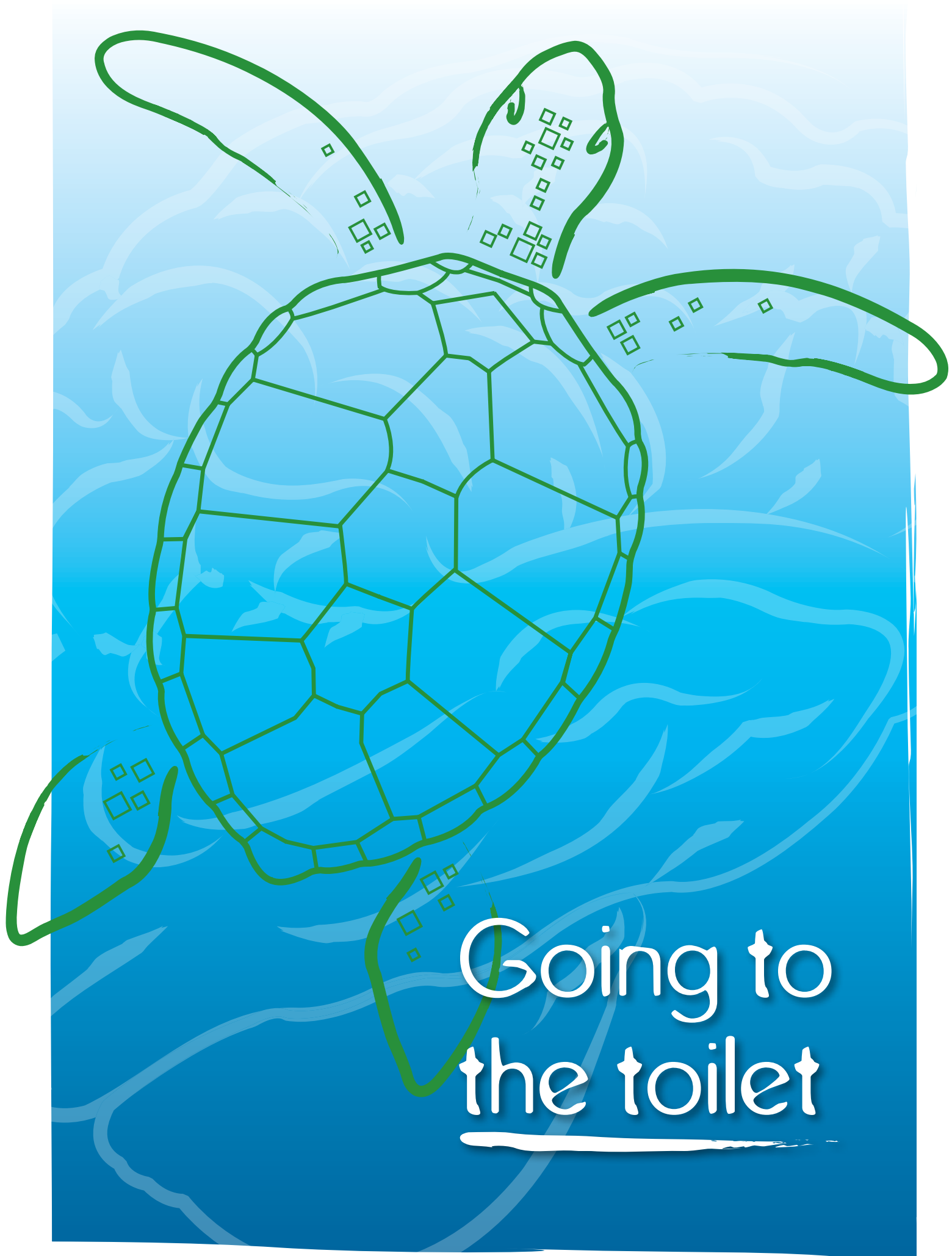
BE SAFE...

Have the right food
and drink.



"Why does Bob eat so slowly now?"

"He's gotta now he's had a stroke. He's being careful so the food goes down the right way. Gotta take small mouthfuls one at a time."



Going to
the toilet

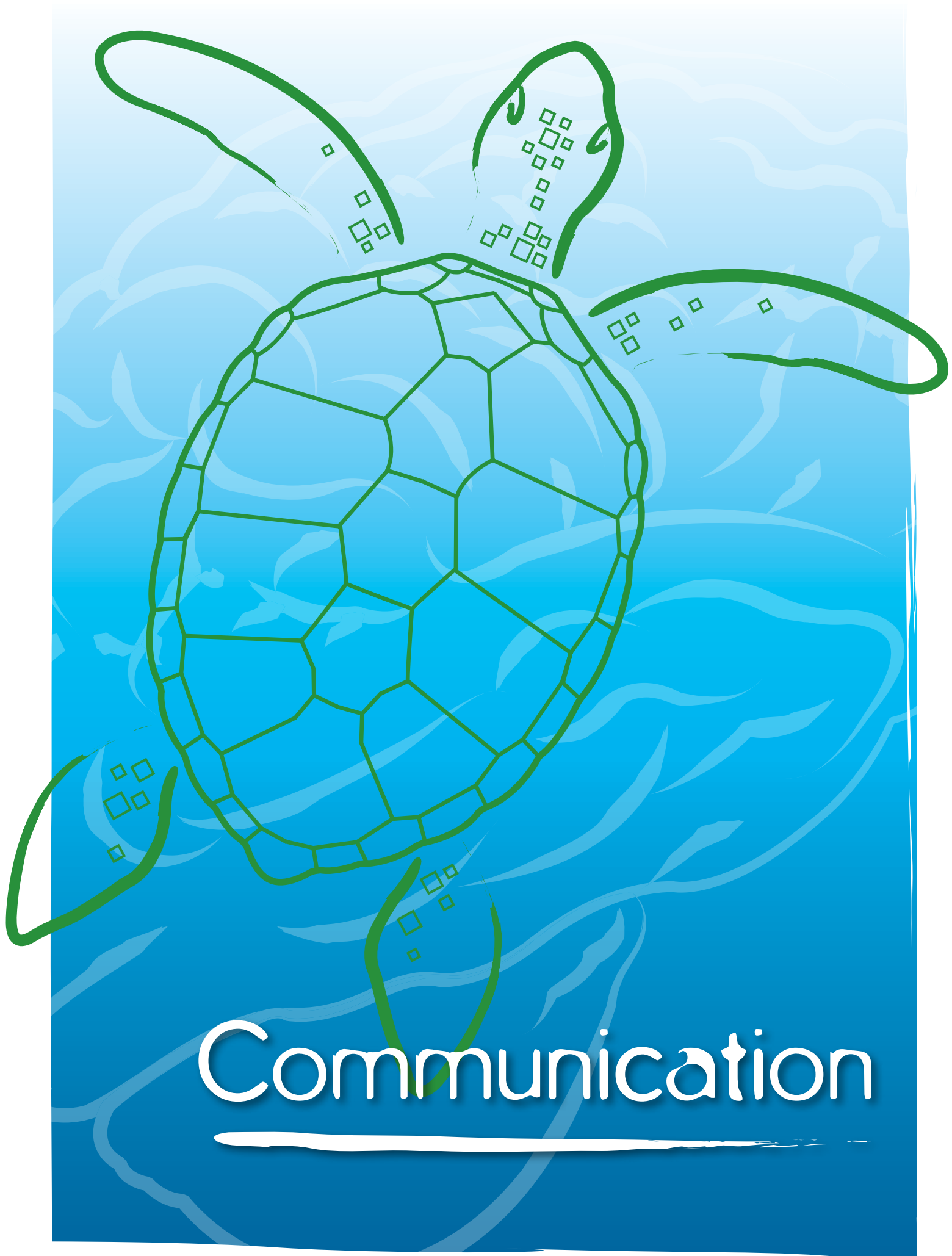
Going to the toilet

Some people have problems going to the toilet.

Things that help:

- Don't drink coffee, tea, soft drinks and grog
- Go to the toilet every few hours
- You can get pads to stay dry
- Wear loose clothes

- Infections in your waterworks can be common after stroke
- Drink lots of water
- If you have problems going to the toilet ask for help from a health worker



Communication

Some problems with my talking might be:

- Trouble understanding
- Jumbled words
- Slurry voice
- Saying the right words
- Harder to read and write

Your health team will help you:

- Speak
- Understand
- Communicate



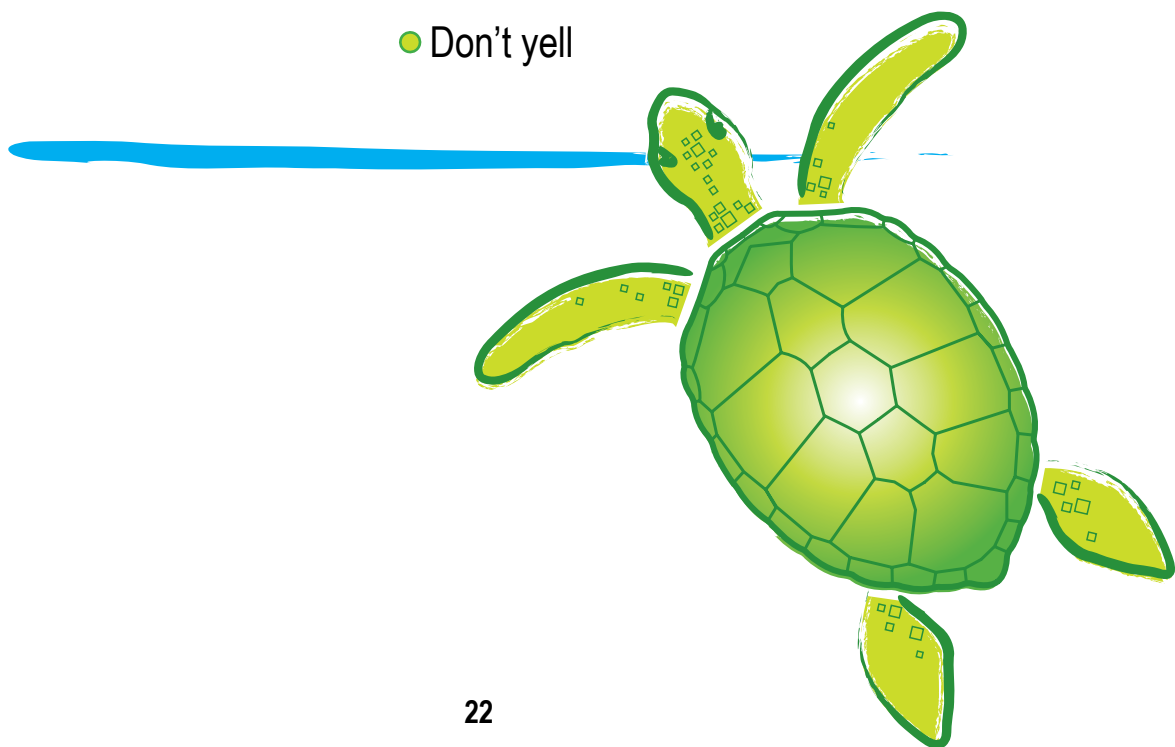
Family and friends can help too

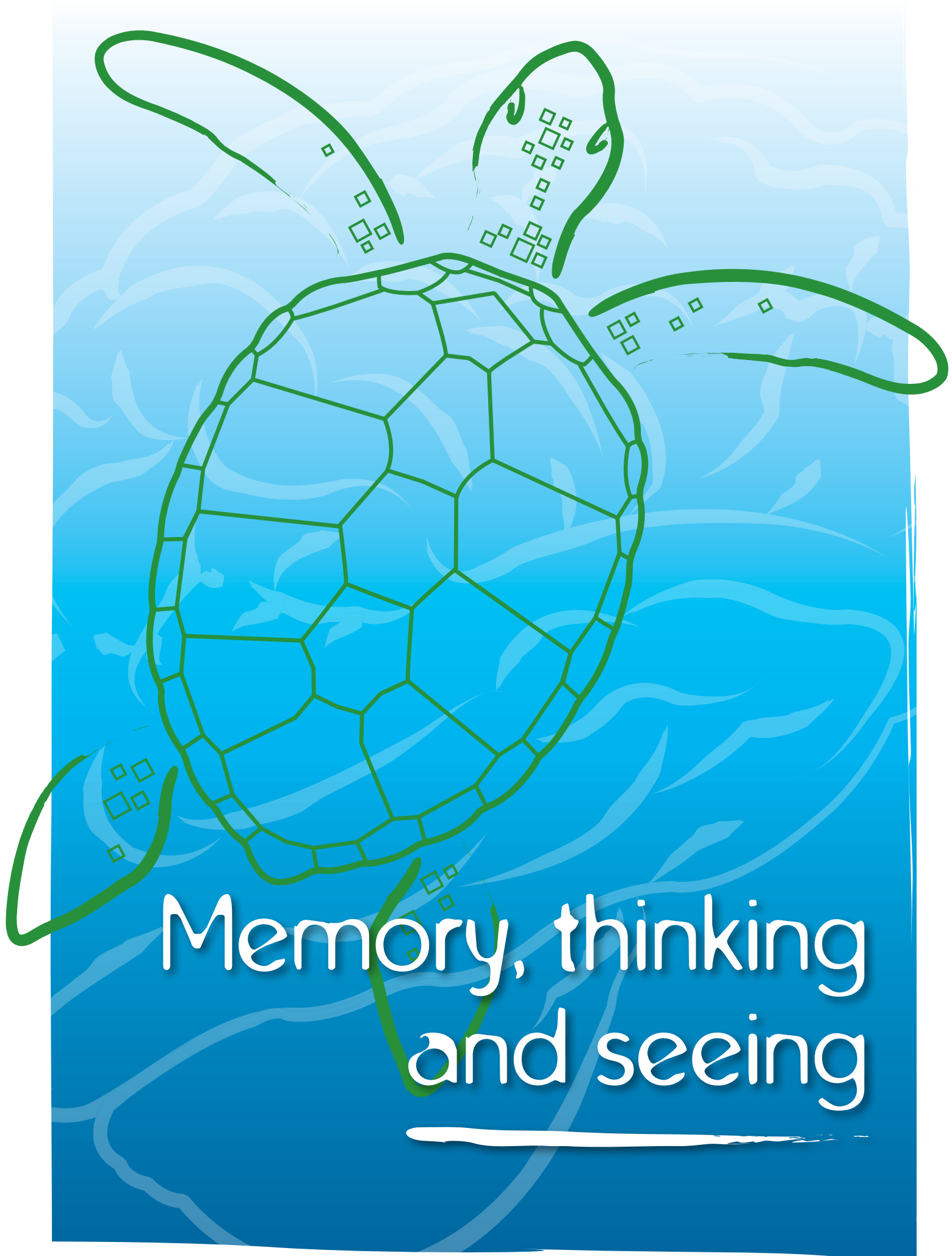
Ask them to:

- Talk in short sentences
- Use body language
- Use writing or pictures
 - Be clear
 - Talk slowly

Remember:

- Listen to what they say
- Don't worry about swearing
 - Don't yell





Memory, thinking
and seeing

Memory and thinking

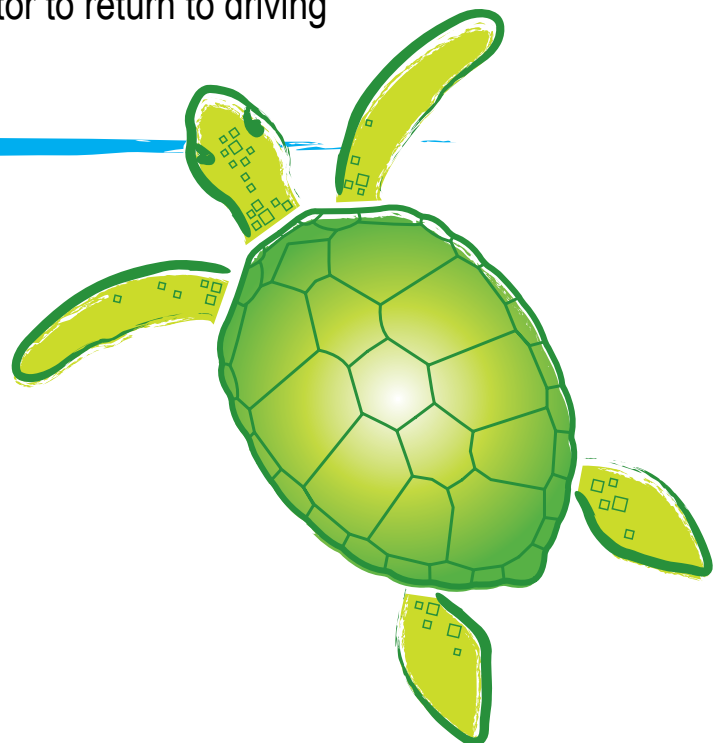
After a stroke you may:

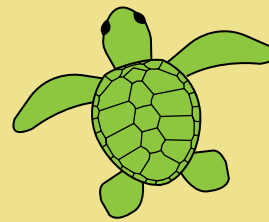
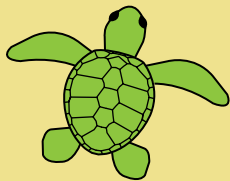
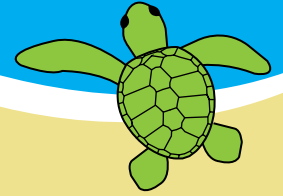
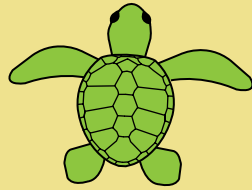
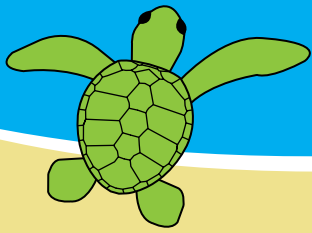
- Forget some things or how to do things easily
 - Have problems concentrating
 - Get tired quickly

Seeing

You may:

- Have problems seeing things
- Not be able to see on one side
 - Bump into things
 - Have problems reading
- Need to be careful when crossing roads
- Need to see your doctor to return to driving



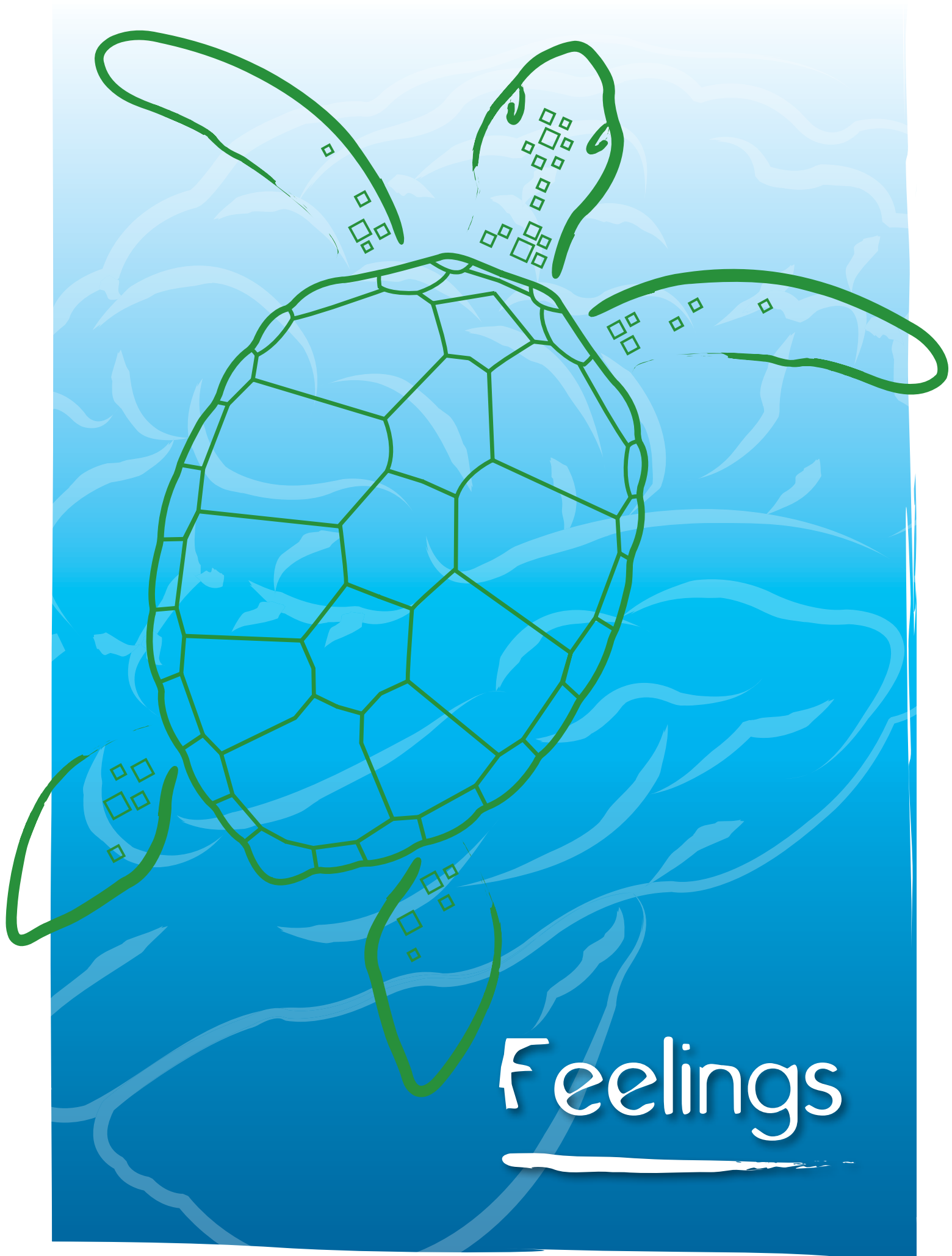


To help your memory:

- Think carefully about things
- Use your mobile phone alarm to set appointments
- Leave notes around your house to remember important things
- Check your newspaper, listen to the radio or TV to help remember the day and date
- Turn your head and look around if you can't find things
- Sleep well

Get a medical clearance from your doctor before you return to driving





Feelings

Depression and withdrawal

You may feel lonely and sad.

- Talking really helps
- Think about what you **can** do
- Do something that you enjoy
- Spend time with family and friends

Adjustment

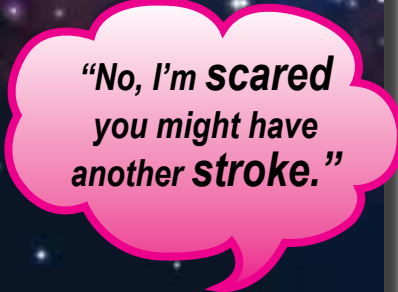
Change can be hard for you and your family.

- Learn about stroke with your family
 - Ask for help
- Be honest and patient with yourself
 - It takes time


Remember a stroke doesn't mean you should stop having sex.
Let your partner know how you think and feel.




*"What you reckon,
you comin' to bed?"*



*"No, I'm scared
you might have
another **stroke**."*



*"Yeah but they said it's
OK to have a bit of fun."*



*"Well, come
here then eh?"*

Why do I get upset so easily?

After a stroke you may laugh or cry more.

Some people get upset easily.

This is normal.

Stroke is not a shame job.

You can have a good life
after stroke.

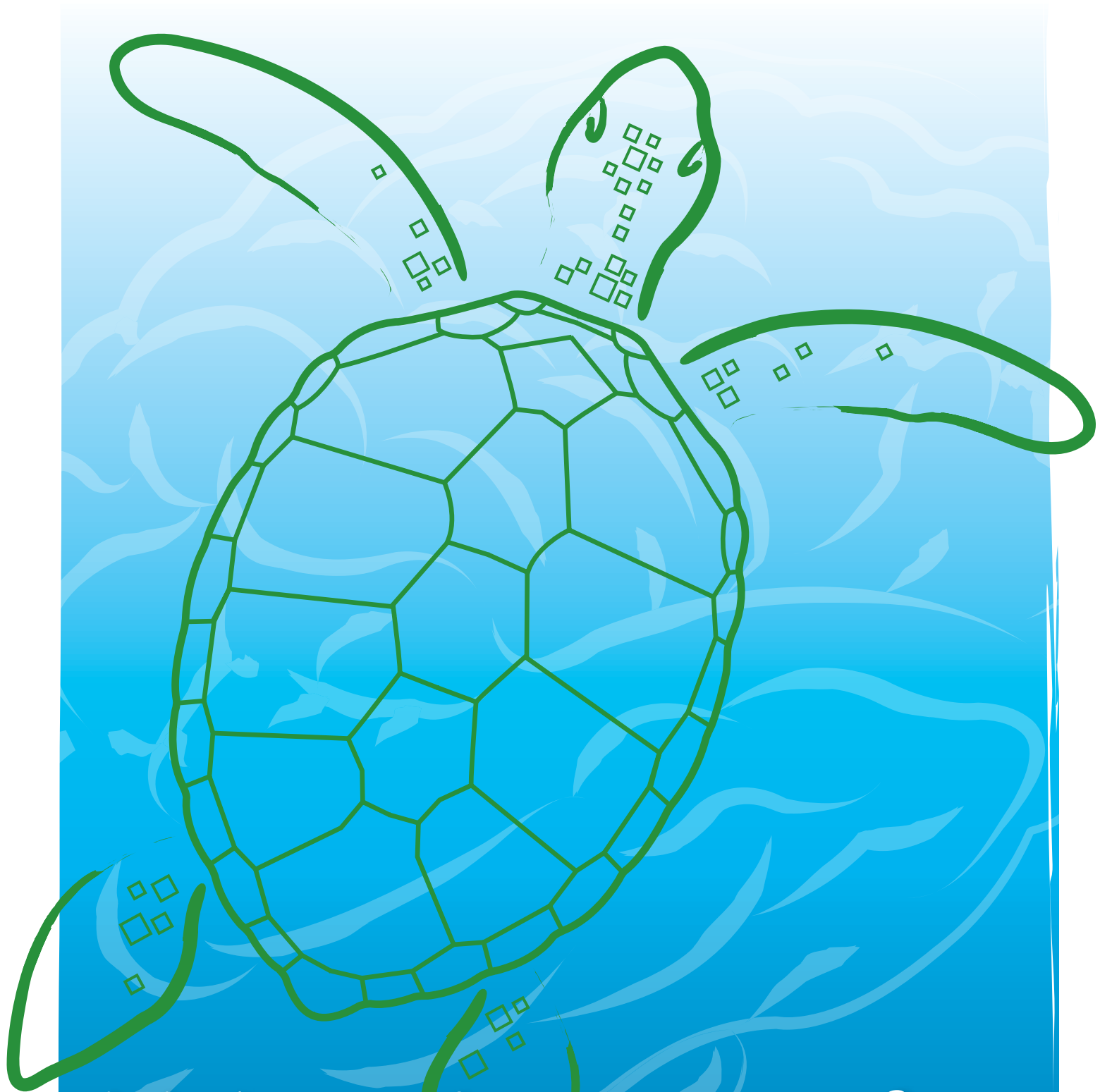
Personal wellness

Your
SPIRIT

Your
MIND

Your
FAMILY

Your
BODY



Making the most of
your second chance

Medicines

- Take your medicines at the right time
- Take your medicine with you when you go to see family, walkabout or away from home
- Put your medicines somewhere safe, out of reach of kids

Have regular checkups with the doctor.



What you can do to reduce your risk of stroke:

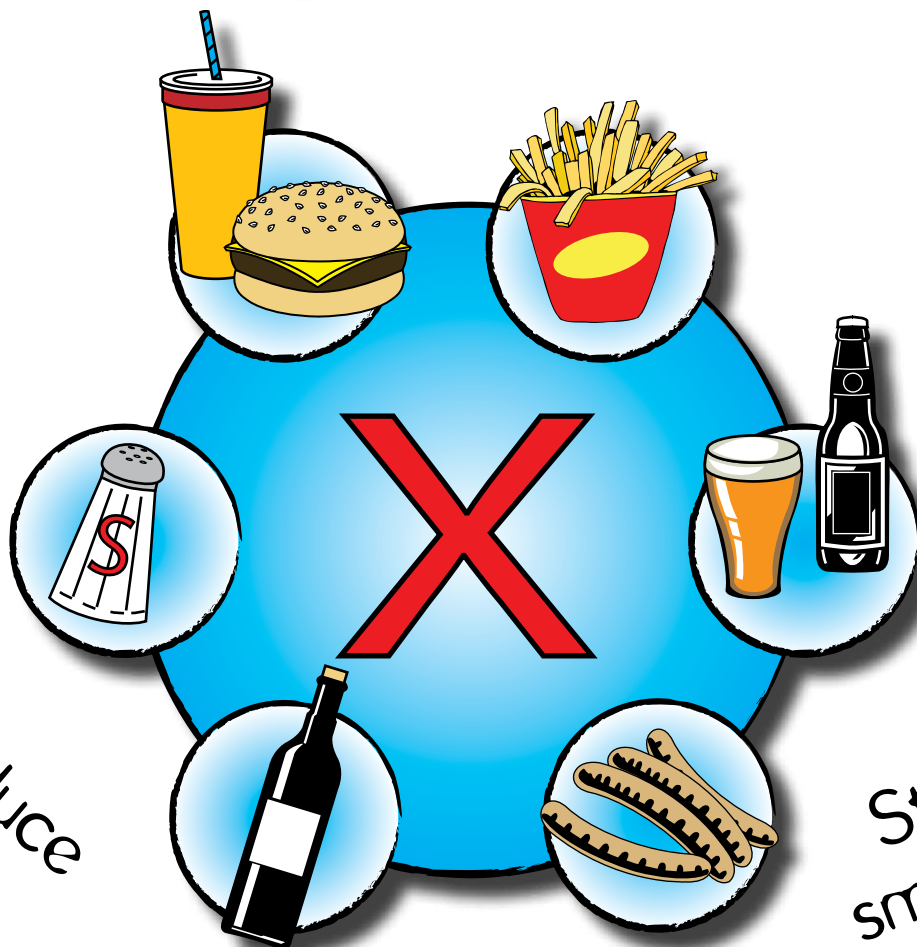
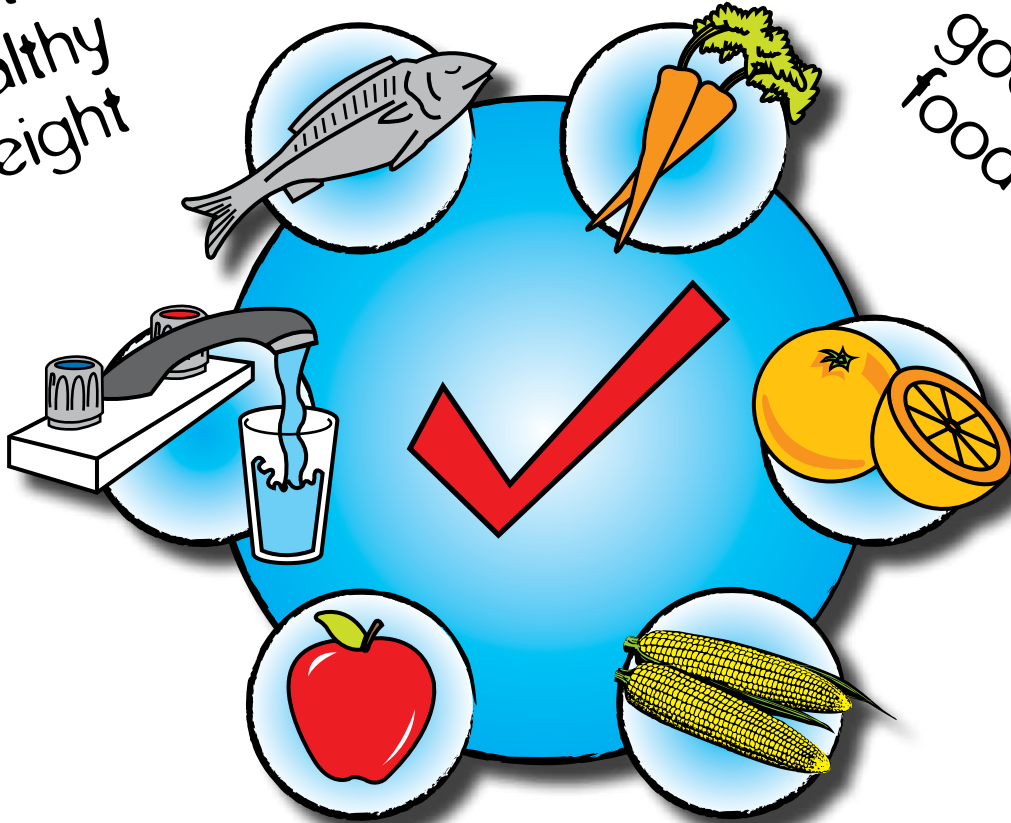
- Stop smoking
- Stay off the grog
- Walk daily, play sport, go fishing and garden
- Get your blood pressure checked
- Take your medicine
- Get regular checkups with your doctor

Eat well

- Have more fruit and vegetables (fresh or frozen is great)
- Eat less fat
- Eat less salt
- Eat less take away

Maintain healthy weight

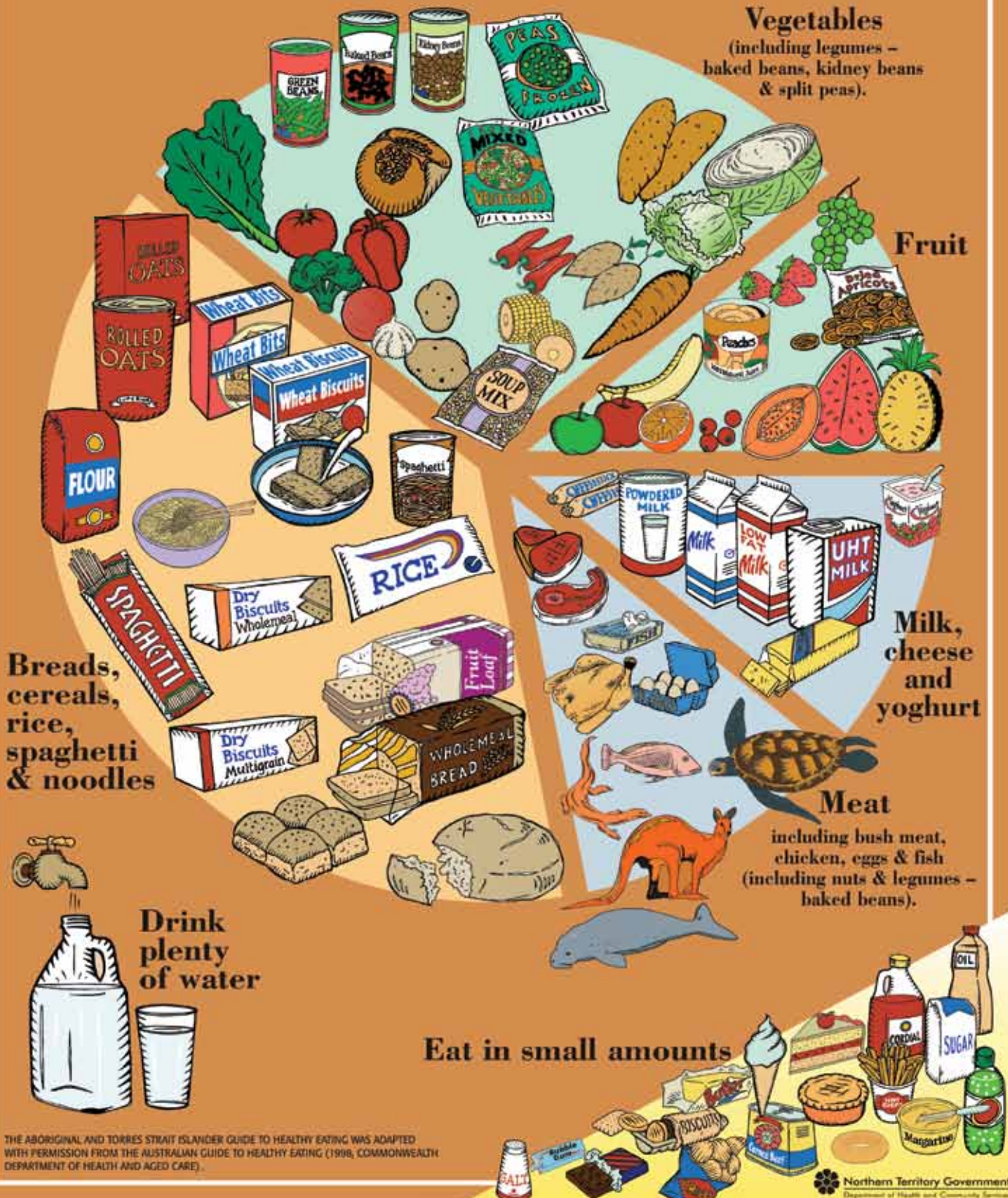
Eat good food



Reduce grog

Stop smoking

Eat good food to be Healthy and Strong



Vegetables
(including legumes – baked beans, kidney beans & split peas).

Fruit

Milk, cheese and yoghurt

Meat

including bush meat, chicken, eggs & fish (including nuts & legumes – baked beans).

Breads, cereals, rice, spaghetti & noodles

Drink plenty of water

Eat in small amounts

THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING WAS ADAPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING (1998, COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE).



Returning to work

Sometimes you need to:

- Work part-time
- Change jobs
- Apply for a Centrelink benefit

Your doctor can help.



Centrelink can also help:

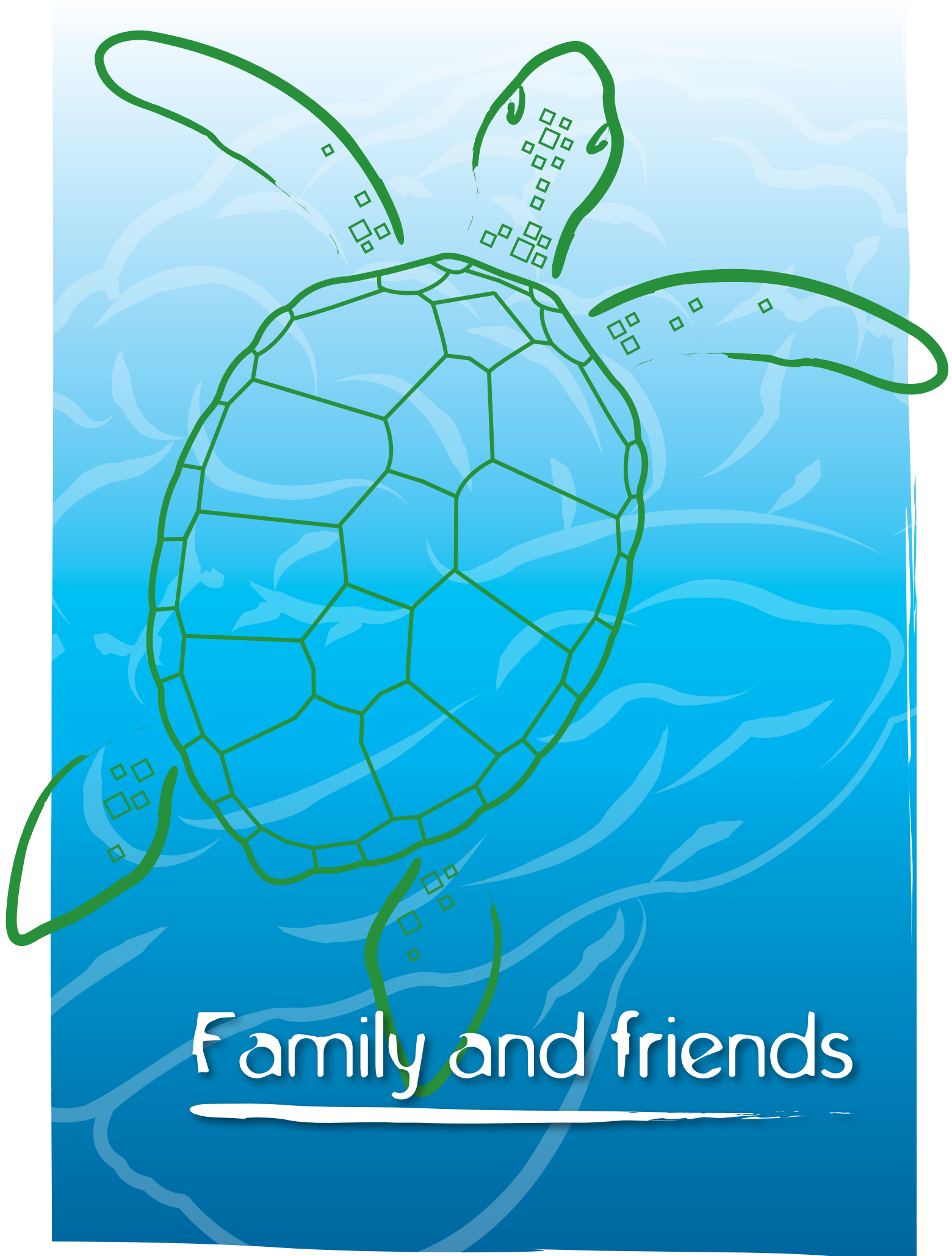
- Indigenous Call Centre - 136 380
- Disability, Sickness and Carers - 132 717

Legal options

If you are not able to make big decisions for yourself, a family member or friend can help make decisions about you and your money.

This is called an Enduring Power of Attorney.

Ask your health team for more information.



Family and friends

How family and friends can help

Family and friends are important and can help.

- Family and friends can learn lots from the health team
- Encourage your relative or friend to do as much as he or she can
 - Be ready to help if needed
- Look after your own health - have breaks to keep you strong and healthy



My Story - Journey After Stroke

I was laying in bed and I tried to turn on my right side and I couldn't. Just didn't take any note of it at the time. The next day I was sitting at my brother's place on the front deck... and that's when it happened... so quick... my nephew said to me... you look funny in the face you know...he started laughing... and I just said what's the matter? I felt strange and I tried to get up to walk but I went off balance... I tried to ring the hospital and the ambulance and they came up and then I found out that I had a stroke.

That's when they flew me from here into town... the hospital and I was there for about 6 or 7 weeks. They took me through the scanner, scanning my brain I couldn't even talk because all my face was supposed to be one sided. My family was there but I just didn't recognise that they were there.

After that I had to do the physio exercise. And that sort of got boring and I said to myself I want to get out of here, and I was determined to, you know, get up and walk. I started to walk on my own. I was in a wheelchair for a while. I spoke with a few doctors and they said half of your brains is dead... and it shocked me and I didn't feel like, you know, one part there I was at a state of committing suicide.

Well I got used to it and I realised that I was not capable of doing the things that I could do before... and I had to set my mind and say I don't want to stay at that level, and I want to get back over to my family. They were there to support me you know. I spoke with a doctor and he said you've gotta have a diet, stick to vegetables and all this... and I done it.

I was very glad to get home. Because in there you don't have the people to come up and visit you. And it really made me try to do things to not let it overcome me. And I used to go to, do walks from here around to the airport. All the way on my own. I done it... and I said I don't want no help. If a car pulled up "you want a lift"... I said "nah I'm doing my exercise"... and I done my exercise... done my walking. All the way.

But I like to let people know if you get that medication, take it don't you know ignore it, take your medicine. Take your tablet whatever they give you. Don't think you're strong because this sort of... stroke it will come on you and it'll rally you down to the lowest... you can't do a thing for yourself. Gotta have a strong mind, a will to do things, not lay back and let others take charge of your life. That's what I'd like to say... you know. Be determined to get out of that rut and be strong in what you do.

Male stroke survivor from Palm Island.

Contacts

National Stroke Foundation

Call StrokeLine: **1800 STROKE** (787 653) or visit: www.strokefoundation.com.au

The Townsville Hospital Acute Stroke and Rehabilitation Unit

Phone: Clinical Nurse Consultant 07 4796 3396 or Medical Reception 07 4796 2120

Centrelink

Caring has many direct and hidden financial costs, which stretch the budget.

Financial assistance is often available for both carers and survivors.

Indigenous Call Centre: 136 380 or Disability Sickness and Carers: 132717

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

The Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre provides referral to services and practical written information to support people who are carers.

Phone: 1800 052 222 or after hours 1800 059 059

Continence Foundation of Australia

Offers information and advice to families, carers and health professionals.

Phone: 1800 33 00 66 or visit: www.continence.org.au

Diabetes Australia

Representing people with diabetes, health professionals and researchers and has local offices in each state.

Phone: 1300 136 588 or visit: www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

Quitline

Provides advice and other assistance to smokers who want to kick the habit.

Phone: 13 7848 or visit: www.quitnow.gov.au

Vision Australia

Provides information and services for the visually impaired.

Phone: 1300 847 466 or visit: www.visionaustralia.org.au

Acknowledgements

Townsville Hospital Stroke Team

Ian Meade - Occupational Therapist

Carolyn Dickson - Physiotherapist

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Bonnie Laskey - Dietitian

Dr Tracey Symmons - Rehabilitation Consultant

Aboriginal and Islander Liaison Officers

Liela Murison

Phil Alley

Ian Pollard

Gwen Giea

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Ian Hitchcock - Photographer

Carl Grant

Richelle Carta - North Queensland Spinal Service

North Queensland Spinal Service

National Stroke Foundation

Jessica Sandilands - Physiotherapist

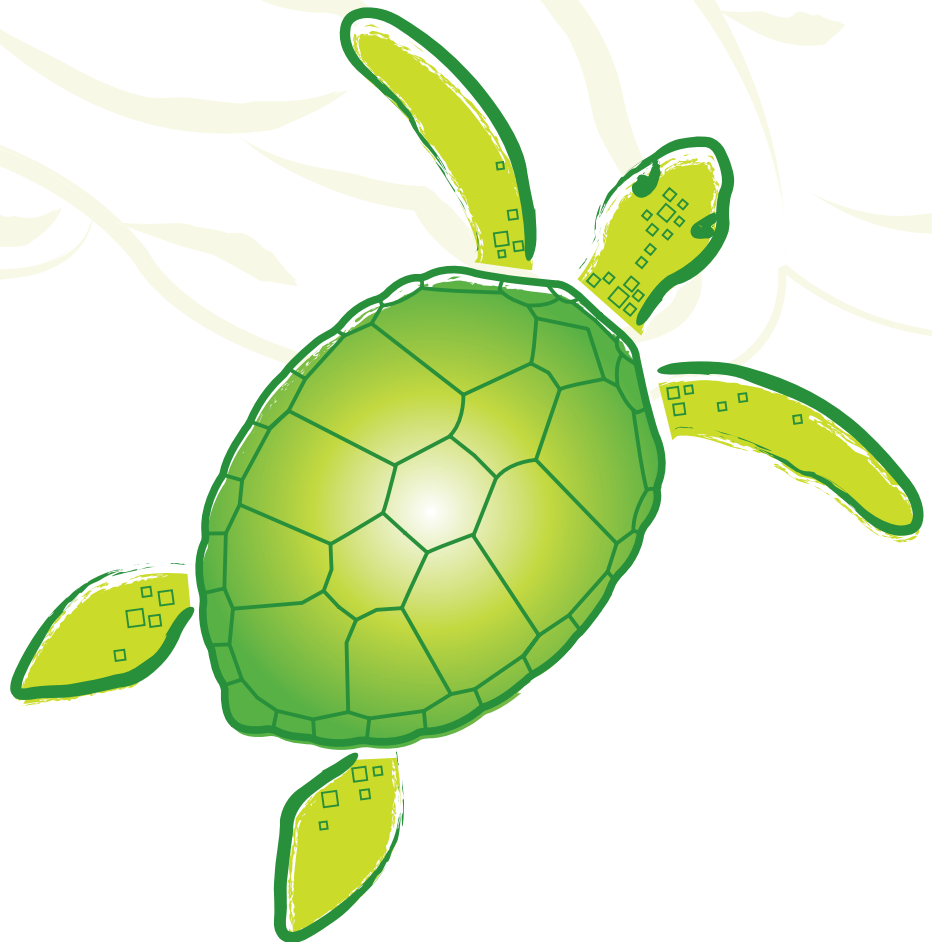
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Prepared by The Aboriginal Stroke Project Steering Committee under
the auspices of the National Stroke Foundation.

Diabetes Australia website:
www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/en/Living-with-Diabetes/Indigenous-Australians1/

Journey After Spinal Cord Injury.
North Queensland Spinal Service.
Email: tsv-nq-spinal-service@health.qld.gov.au

National Stroke Foundation website:
www.strokefoundation.com.au



National Stroke Foundation
National Office

Level 7, 461 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: 03 9670 1000

Email: admin@strokefoundation.com.au


We have offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Perth.

StrokeLine:

1800 STROKE (787 653)

www.strokefoundation.com.au

Making the most of your second chance



You can have a good
life after a stroke.