

Stroke and TIA: What You Need to Know and Do

Stroke is the leading cause of disability for adults and the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. Recognizing that you or someone else is having a stroke and knowing what to do can be a life saver.

What is a stroke? What is a TIA?

A **stroke** is when blood flow to part of your brain suddenly stops. It can happen because of a blockage in a blood vessel (**ischemic stroke**) or because a blood vessel in your brain bursts (**hemorrhagic stroke**). Because brain cells need oxygen and nutrients carried by the blood, brain cells begin to die within minutes of a stroke.

A **TIA** (transient ischemic attack) happens when a blood vessel leading to your brain is temporarily blocked. Sometimes called a “mini-stroke,” a TIA can cause some of the same symptoms as a stroke, though they’re temporary and cause no permanent damage. Because TIA often is a warning of a coming stroke, it should never be ignored.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Stroke signs and symptoms happen suddenly. They include **SUDDEN**:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

If you notice any of these signs and symptoms, call 911 immediately. Note the exact time the person was last seen well, and give this time to the paramedics or hospital staff. This important information can affect treatment decisions.

During a stroke, every second counts.

B.E. F.A.S.T.! Call 911 if you see any of the stroke symptoms below:

B - BALANCE.

Is there a sudden loss of balance or coordination?

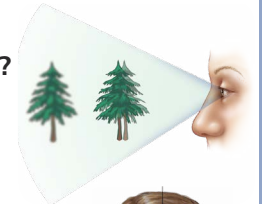
(To check, ask the person to walk a straight line or touch each finger to their nose.)



E - EYES.

Are there sudden vision changes?

(To check, ask if the person has double vision or cannot see out of one eye.)



F - FACE.

Does one side of the face droop?

(To check, ask the person to smile.)



A - ARM.

Does one arm drift downward?

(To check, ask the person to raise both arms.)



S - SPEECH.

Are the words slurred? Is speech confused?

(To check, ask the person to repeat a sentence.)

*My blink a frown...
thash not...
What's happening?*



T - TIME TO CALL 911.

When was the person last seen looking or acting normally?

Note that time and tell paramedics.



Am I at risk for stroke? What can I do?

Anyone can have a stroke. But studies show that you are more likely to have a stroke if you have certain risk factors, many of which YOU can control.

Risk factors I CAN do something about:

Check the risk factors below that apply to you, then see instructions that apply:

- High blood pressure
- Cholesterol problems (high LDL or triglycerides, or low HDL)
- Diabetes
- Atrial fibrillation or other heart disease
- Atherosclerosis (fatty buildup in your arteries)



Partner with your doctor to manage risks.

- See your doctor at least once a year.
- Keep all follow-up appointments
- Take prescribed medication (especially for high blood pressure, cholesterol, or diabetes) exactly as prescribed.

Managing chronic illness is one of the best ways to prevent a stroke.

- Smoking
- Drug or alcohol abuse



Stop smoking and using alcohol and drugs.

- Talk to your doctor about quitting smoking and reducing your alcohol and drug use.
- For help with quitting smoking, call this free, confidential phone line 1-888-567-TRUTH (1-888-567-8788). (The Spanish language line is 1-877-629-1585.) You can also visit www.tobaccofreeutah.org/pdfs/quitnetfact.pdf

Quit NOW to dramatically improve your health today and in the future.

- Obesity
- Physical inactivity



Maintain a healthy weight, and get moving!

- Ask your doctor or a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) how to lose weight safely, slowly, and permanently.
- Do moderate exercise for 30 minutes on most days — and look for ways to be more active all day long.

Healthy diet and exercise will protect your heart, brain, and bones and control blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes to prevent stroke.

- Use of birth control pills (greater risk if you're over age 35 or if you smoke)
- On hormone replacement therapy



Talk to your doctor about your risk.

- Ask your doctor about other options for birth control.
- Quit smoking to reduce your birth control pill risk.

Risk factors I CANNOT change:

Check the risk factors below that apply to you:

- Ethnicity (African Americans and Hispanics have a higher risk)
- Family or medical history of stroke or TIA (you or someone in your family has had a stroke or TIA in the past)
- Age (the older you are, the higher your risk)