

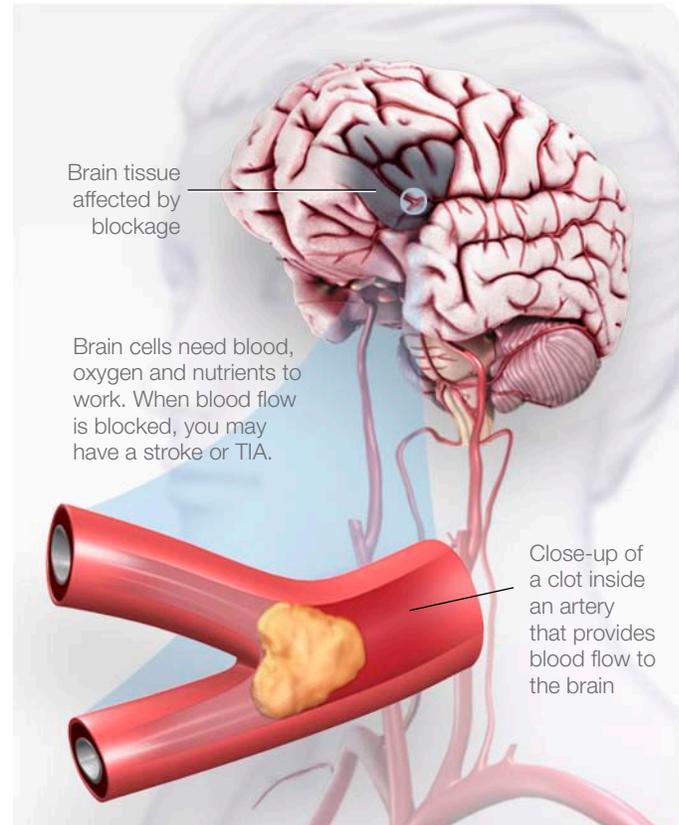


let's talk about

Stroke, TIA and Warning Signs

Stroke occurs when a blood vessel bringing blood and oxygen to the brain gets blocked or ruptures. When this happens, brain cells don't get the blood and oxygen that they need to survive. This causes nerve cells stop working and die within minutes. Then, the part of the body they control can't function either. The effects of stroke may be permanent depending on how many cells are lost, where they are in the brain, and other factors.

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in America.



What is a TIA?

TIA, or transient ischemic attack, is a “minor or mini stroke” that occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery for a short time. The symptoms of a TIA are the same as those of a stroke, but they usually last only a few minutes. About 15 percent of major strokes are preceded by TIAs, so **don't ignore a TIA. Call 9-1-1 or seek emergency medical attention immediately!**

Isn't stroke hopeless?

No. Stroke is largely preventable. You can reduce your stroke risk by living a healthy lifestyle — controlling high blood pressure; not smoking; eating a healthy diet low in saturated and *trans* fats; being physically active; maintaining a healthy body weight; managing diabetes; and drinking alcohol moderately or not at all.

Also, much has been done to fight the effects of stroke. There is a clot-dissolving drug called tissue plasminogen

activator (tPA) to treat stroke. tPA can stop a stroke in progress and reduce disability from stroke by breaking up a blood clot that might be stopping the flow of blood to the brain. But to be eligible for tPA, you must seek emergency treatment right away and have a clot-caused stroke. It must be given within 3 to 4.5 hours after symptoms start. The sooner tPA is given, the greater the possibility of a better outcome after stroke.

For people with blood clots in larger arteries, tPA often does not dissolve them completely. In this case, a procedure, called mechanical thrombectomy, should be done within six hours of the first symptoms of stroke. In most cases this is done only after the patient receives IV tPA. To remove the clot, doctors thread a catheter (thin tube) with a stent through an artery in the groin up to the blocked artery in the brain. The stent opens and grabs the clot. The doctors then remove the stent with the trapped clot. If necessary, other devices may be used.

(continued)



What are warning signs of stroke?

You and your family should recognize the warning signs of stroke. You may have some or all of these signs. Note the time when symptoms start and call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical number in your area. Stroke is a medical emergency!

Don't ignore these warning signs, even if they go away. Timing is important.

Stroke Warning Signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember how to recognize a stroke and what to do. Spot a stroke **F**AST. **F**ace drooping. **A**rm weakness. **S**peech Difficulty. **T**ime to call 9-1-1.

Before you need to take emergency action, create a list of emergency phone numbers and keep a copy next to your phone and with you at all times.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) to learn more about stroke or find local support groups, or visit **StrokeAssociation.org**.
- 2 Sign up to get *Stroke Connection* magazine, a free magazine for stroke survivors and caregivers at **strokeconnection.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with stroke by joining our Support Network at **strokeassociation.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

Which facility close to me is best equipped to treat me if I am having stroke symptoms?

How can I reduce my risk for stroke?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **strokeassociation.org/letstalkaboutstroke** to learn more.