

Stroke

A stroke is a condition in which brain cells are suddenly deprived of oxygen because of a lack of adequate blood flow to the brain.

The patient may suddenly lose functions related to the part of the brain that has been damaged. Some symptoms may be loss of the ability to speak, difficulty with memory, loss of function of an arm or leg or drooping of one side of the face.

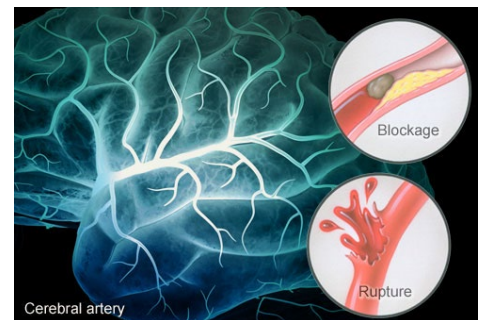
Stroke
is a leading cause of serious, long-term disability.

TWO MAIN TYPES OF STROKES

The two main types of strokes include ischemic stroke and hemorrhagic stroke.

ISCHEMIC STROKE

Ischemic stroke accounts for about 87 percent of all strokes and occurs when a blood clot blocks blood flow to part of the brain. If the blood clot forms on the wall of an artery it is called a “*thrombus*.” If a blood clot forms somewhere in the body and breaks off to become free-floating, it is called an “*embolus*.” This wandering clot may be carried through the bloodstream to the brain where it can become lodged, blocking blood flow.



HEMORRHAGIC STROKE

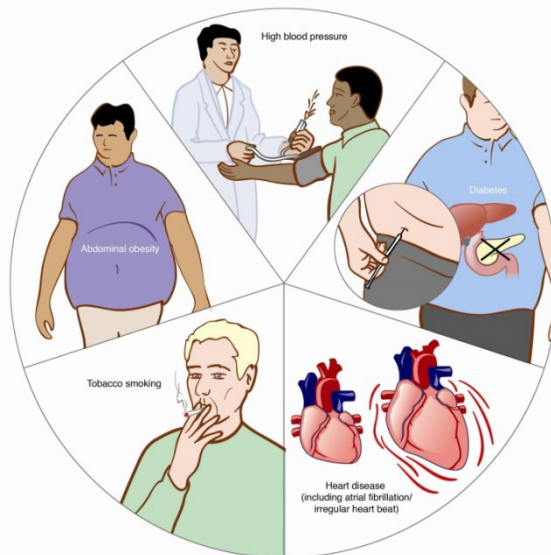
A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a small artery in the brain bursts. If the ruptured artery is on the brain’s surface, the blood that leaks from the artery fills the space between the brain and skull with blood (subarachnoid hemorrhage), which can put too much pressure on the brain if larger amounts of bleeding occur. If the ruptured artery is deeper in the brain, such as a defective artery or “*aneurysm*,” the bleeding fills the surrounding tissue with blood (cerebral hemorrhage), which also puts too much pressure on the brain. In each of these cases, the sudden lack of blood flow to the brain and the buildup of too much pressure on the brain, both contribute to the loss of function that the person experiences.

STROKE RISK FACTOR

Anyone can have a stroke no matter what your age, race, or gender. But the chances of having a stroke increase if a person has certain risk factors or criteria that can cause a stroke. The good news is that up to 80 percent of strokes can be prevented, and the best way to protect yourself and loved ones from stroke is to understand personal risk and how to manage it.

CONTROLLABLE RISK FACTORS:

- High blood pressure
- Atrial fibrillation
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Atherosclerosis
- Circulation problems
- Tobacco use and smoking
- Alcohol use
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity

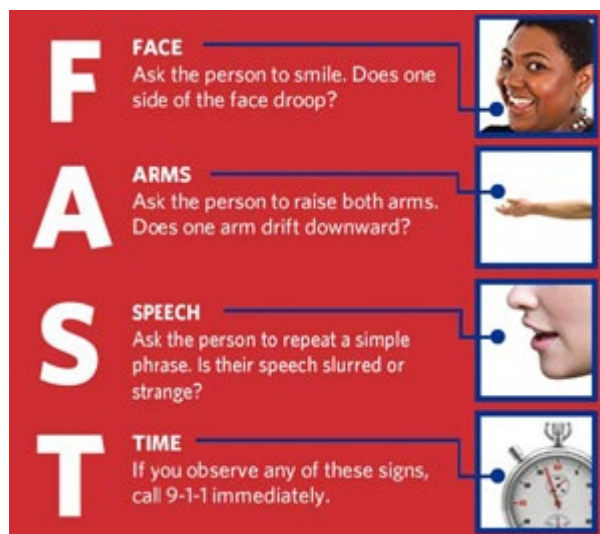


UNCONTROLLABLE RISK FACTORS:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Family history
- Previous stroke or TIA
- Fibromuscular dysplasia
- Patent foramen ovale (PFO or Hole in the Heart)

COMMON STROKE SYMPTOMS SEEN IN BOTH MEN AND WOMEN:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of 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 dizziness or trouble walking, with loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.




WOMEN MAY REPORT UNIQUE STROKE SYMPTOMS:

- Sudden face and limb pain
- Sudden hiccups
- Sudden nausea
- Sudden general weakness, fatigue

- Sudden mental changes and disorientation
- Sudden chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations

Rapid intervention is crucial in the treatment of stroke. The longer a stroke goes untreated, the greater the chance of permanent neurological damage.

If a person develops any of these symptoms, they should call 911 and be taken to the nearest hospital Emergency Department. Treatment must be started in the hospital within 3 to 4.5 hours of onset of symptoms.



Stroke Risk Scorecard

Each box that applies to you equals 1 point. Total your score at the bottom of each column and compare with the stroke risk levels on the back.

RISK FACTOR	HIGH RISK	CAUTION	LOW RISK
Blood Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/> >140/90 or unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> 120-139/80-89	<input type="checkbox"/> <120/80
Atrial Fibrillation	<input type="checkbox"/> Irregular heartbeat	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular heartbeat
Smoking	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoker	<input type="checkbox"/> Trying to quit	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonsmoker
Cholesterol	<input type="checkbox"/> >240 or unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> 200-239	<input type="checkbox"/> <200
Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Borderline	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Couch potato	<input type="checkbox"/> Some exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular exercise
Diet	<input type="checkbox"/> Overweight	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly overweight	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy weight
Stroke in Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> No
TOTAL SCORE	<input type="checkbox"/> High Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Caution	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Risk

Risk Scorecard Results

High Risk ≥3: Ask about stroke prevention right away.

Caution 4-6: A good start. Work on reducing risk.

Low Risk 6-8: You're doing very well at controlling stroke risk!

REFERENCES

<http://www.stroke.org>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/7624.php>