

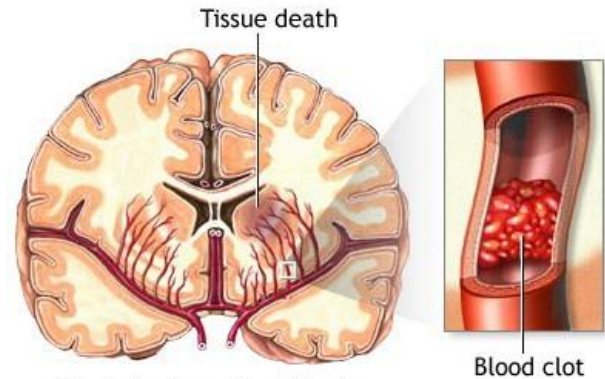
**Office of Integrated Health
Health & Safety Information**

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Stroke

What is a stroke?

A stroke is a **medical emergency**. Strokes happen when blood flow to your brain stops. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die. There are two kinds of stroke. The more common kind, called *ischemic stroke*, is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel in the brain. The other kind, called *hemorrhagic stroke*, is caused by a blood vessel that breaks and bleeds into the brain. In either case, parts of the brain become damaged or die. A stroke can cause lasting brain damage, long-term disability, or even death.



<https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/about.htm>

Signs and Symptoms of a Stroke

The stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. It is important to recognize symptoms of a stroke quickly.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following simple test:

F—Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A—Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T—Time: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

Addition signs and symptoms could include:

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

Stroke Diagnosis and Treatment

If a stroke is suspected, call 911 immediately. The key to stroke treatment and recovery is getting to the hospital quickly. Calling an ambulance means that medical staff can begin life-saving treatment on the way to the emergency room.

Prevention of Stroke

There are several factors that contribute to an individual's risk for having a stroke. Some factors are controllable such as diet and lifestyle choices like physical activity. Others are out of one's control like family history or genetic predisposition. There are also medical conditions that increase an individual's risk for stroke.

High blood pressure: High blood pressure, also referred to as Hypertension, is the leading cause of stroke and the most significant controllable risk factor. If you have high blood pressure, it is very important to maintain a prescribed medication regimen from your doctor.

High Cholesterol: High levels of cholesterol in your body can build up and block essential blood flow through your arteries.

Diabetes: Diabetes causes sugars to build up in the blood and prevent oxygen and nutrients from getting to the various parts of your body, including your brain.

It is important to discuss with your medical team your risks for having a stroke along with managing any medical conditions that may increase your risk.

Recommendations

A stroke is a serious medical condition that requires immediate medical attention. If you or an individual has a medical condition that increases your risk for a stroke, consult with your medical provider to review your risks. Finally, be sure to follow all prescribed medications and/or diet regimen.

Signs of a stroke should not be ignored. Act FAST and get immediate medical help.

Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/about.htm>

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/>

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