

What are the Warning Signs of Stroke and TIA?

Stroke is the third largest cause of death in America today. It's also the leading cause of severe long-term disability. People over 55 years old have more chance of stroke, and the risk gets greater as you get older. Men, African-Americans and people with diabetes or heart disease are the most at risk for stroke.

The good news is that 3.8 million people who have had strokes are alive today. Knowing the signs of stroke is important. If you act fast and see a doctor right away, you could prevent a major stroke or save your life!

You and your family should learn these warning signs of stroke. You may have some or all of them. They may last from just a few minutes to 24 hours.

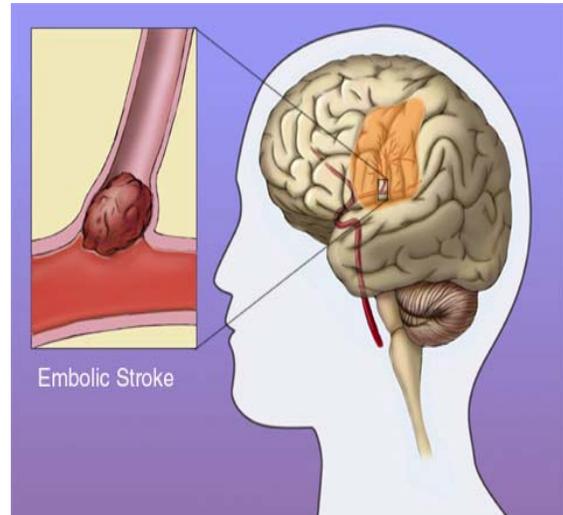
- ◆ Suddenly feel weak in an arm, hand
- ◆ Can't feel one side of face or body
- ◆ Suddenly can't see out of one eye
- ◆ Suddenly have a hard time talking
- ◆ Can't understand what someone is saying
- ◆ Feel dizzy or lose balance
- ◆ Have the worst headache you've ever had

How does stroke happen?

A stroke happens when a blood vessel that feeds the brain gets clogged or bursts. Then that part of the brain can't work, and neither can the part of the body it controls

TIA's, or transient ischemic (TRAN-see-unt is-KEM-ik) attacks, are "warning strokes" that can happen when a blood clot clogssome an artery for a short time. But they usually last only a few minutes. If you have some signs, see a doctor right away!

Uncontrollable high blood pressure, smoking and heart disease put you at a higher risk for stroke.



blood

Your brain cells need blood, oxygen and nutrients to work. When the blood flow is blocked, you can have a stroke or TIA.

What should I do if I suspect a stroke?

- ◆ Call 911 or the emergency medical number in your area (fire department or ambulance).
 - ◆ If you can get the victim to the hospital quicker by driving yourself, do it.
 - ◆ If you're having a stroke, don't drive; ask Someone to drive you to the emergency room of the nearest hospital.
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What else can I do?

Before there's an emergency, it's a good idea to find out where the emergency entrance is to your nearest hospital. Also keep a list of emergency phone numbers next to your phone and with you at all times, just in case. Take these steps NOW.

How can I help prevent stroke?

- You could save your life or save yourself from being disabled by stroke if you:
- ◆ Stop smoking
 - ◆ Keep blood pressure down
 - ◆ Eat a low-fat, low-salt diet
 - ◆ Take off extra weight
 - ◆ Get regular exercise
 - ◆ Follow doctor's orders
 - ◆ Take your medicine
 - ◆ Get regular checkups.
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How can I learn more?

- ◆ Talk to your doctor, nurse or health care professional. Or call your local American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721.
 - ◆ Support and understanding are important for stroke recovery. You can get help from the American Heart Association's Stroke Connection at 1-800-553-6321.
 - ◆ If you have heart disease or stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk of these diseases.
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Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

- ◆ Take a few minutes to write down your own questions for the next time you see your doctor.

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