

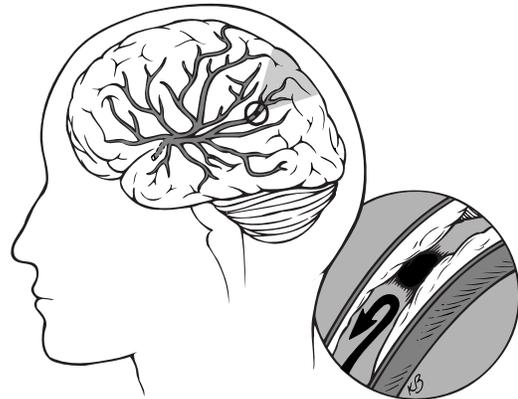


# Let's Talk About Stroke, TIA and Warning Signs

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## What is a stroke?

Stroke is the No. 3 cause of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in America. Stroke is a disease that affects the arteries of the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel bringing blood and oxygen to the brain gets blocked or ruptures so brain cells don't get the flow of blood that they need. Deprived of oxygen, nerve cells can't function and die within minutes. And when nerve cells don't function, the part of the body they control can't function either. The devastating effects of stroke are often permanent because dead brain cells can't be replaced.



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

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## What is a TIA?

TIA, or transient ischemic (TRAN-see-ynt is-KE-mik) attack, is a "mini stroke" that occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery for a short time. The symptoms of a TIA are like the warning signs of a stroke, but they usually last

only a few minutes. About 10 percent of strokes are preceded by TIAs. TIAs are strong predictors of stroke risk. **Don't ignore them. Call 9-1-1 or seek emergency medical attention immediately!**

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## Why should I care about stroke? It seems hopeless.

The good news about stroke is that it's largely preventable. Research has shown that you can take steps to prevent stroke by reducing and controlling your risk factors.

The other good news is that more than 4.7 million people who have had strokes are alive today! And much is being done to treat strokes

and stop them in their tracks. For example, the FDA's approval of the clot-dissolving drug tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) to treat stroke represents a major advance in the fight against stroke. If you act fast and seek emergency treatment right away, you could reduce disabilities caused by stroke.

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## 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 started and call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical number in your area. Stroke is a medical emergency!

## What are warning signs of stroke? (continued)

Don't ignore these warning signs, even if they go away! Timing is very important! An emergency medical doctor must treat you within three hours of the onset of symptoms.

### 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

Before you need to take emergency action, 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 learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. Ask about other stroke topics. This is one of many *Let's Talk About Stroke* fact sheets available.
- For more information on stroke, or to receive additional fact sheets, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).
- If you or someone you know has had a stroke, call the American

Stroke Association's "Warmline" at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653), and:

- ✓ Speak with other stroke survivors and caregivers, trained to answer your questions and offer support
- ✓ Get information on stroke support groups in your area
- ✓ Sign up to get *Stroke Connection Magazine*, a free publication for stroke survivors and caregivers

## What are the Warning Signs of Stroke?

-  **Sudden weakness or numbness 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 headaches with no known cause**

 Learn to recognize a stroke.  
*Because time lost is brain lost.*

Today there are treatments that can reduce the risk of damage from the most common type of stroke, but only if you get help quickly — within 3 hours of your first symptoms.

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these warning signs!

## Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

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

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?

*The statistics in this kit were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update at [americanheart.org/statistics](http://americanheart.org/statistics).*

*The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. Your contributions will support research and educational programs that help reduce disability and death from stroke.*

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*Learn and Live.*