

Stroke // What You Need to Know

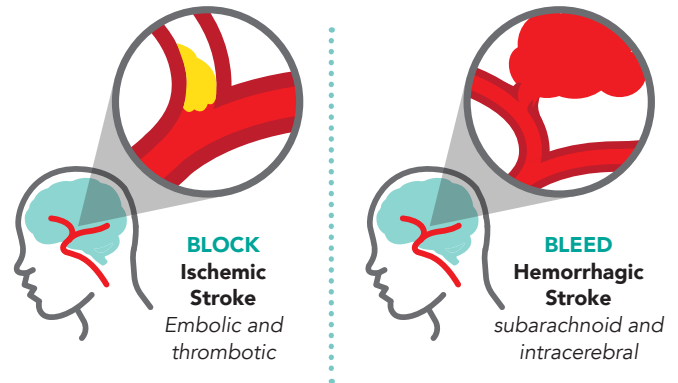
A stroke can be a traumatic, frightening event. We want you to know there is **always hope** for healing.

What is a Stroke?

Stroke is a disease that happens suddenly and affects the arteries within the brain.

There are three kinds of stroke diseases:

- Ischemic stroke – brain blood vessel is blocked or clogged.
- Hemorrhagic stroke – a brain blood vessel breaks.
- Transient ischemic attack – when a blood vessel is blocked for a brief time.



Stroke Signs and Symptoms: BEFAST

A quick way to remember is **BEFAST**:

BALANCE

Sudden loss of balance or coordination



EYES

Sudden trouble seeing or blurred vision in one or both eyes



FACE

Facial drooping on one side of the face, or facial numbness



ARM

Sudden weakness or numbness of an arm or leg on one side of the body



SPEECH

Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech



TIME

Time to call 911



How can you prevent a stroke?

- Take medications to control your:
 - Blood Pressure
 - Diabetes
 - Cholesterol
 - Abnormal heart beat
- Quit smoking
- Exercise to maintain a healthy weight
- Keep all your doctor appointments
- Manage personal risk factors with your primary physician



What is an ischemic stroke?

Ischemic stroke is the most common type of stroke. Ischemic strokes happen when an artery in the brain is blocked. As a result, the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, which causes brain cells to die. The part of the brain that is affected stops working correctly. There are two types of ischemic strokes:

EMBOLIC STROKE: In an embolic stroke, a blood clot or fatty plaque fragment forms, usually in the heart or the large arteries leading to the brain, and then moves through the arteries to the brain. The clot blocks a blood vessel and leads to a stroke.

THROMBOTIC STROKE: A thrombotic stroke is a blood clot that forms inside an artery that supplies blood to the brain. The clot blocks blood flow and causes a stroke.

What is a hemorrhagic stroke?

A hemorrhagic stroke happens when a blood vessel in the brain bursts and spills blood into or around the brain. The bleeding causes brain cells to die and the part of the brain that is affected stops working correctly. There are different types of hemorrhagic strokes.

INTRACEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE: This kind of stroke is caused when a burst blood vessel bleeds into brain tissue. High blood pressure is the most common cause of this type of stroke.

SUBARACHNOID HEMORRHAGE: This kind of stroke is caused when a blood vessel bursts near the surface of the brain and blood leaks in between the brain and the skull. This blood may cause nearby blood vessels to spasm, and that reduces blood flow to the brain and causes a stroke. This type of stroke can be caused by different things, but it is usually caused by a ruptured brain aneurysm.

ANEURYSM: An aneurysm is a weak spot on the wall of an artery in the brain that bulges out into a thin bubble. As the area gets bigger, the wall may weaken and burst. If it bursts, blood leaks inside or around the brain leading to a hemorrhagic stroke.

What is a transient ischemic attack (TIA)?

A Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) occurs when an artery within the brain or one that goes to the brain is blocked for a short time. The blood flow to that area of the brain slows or stops. When a TIA happens, the artery either becomes unblocked after a short time or a new pathway opens, and blood flow goes back to normal. Often the symptoms last for only a short time and then disappear. A TIA is a serious warning that you might have a stroke.

How can you learn more about stroke?

- American Stroke Association: StrokeAssociation.org or 1-800-4-Stroke (1-888-478-7653)
- Sign up to get the Stroke Connection Magazine, a free publication for stroke survivors and caregivers
Log on to: <http://strokeconnection.strokeassociation.org/Subscribe/>