American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

Together to End Stroke™

Nationally sponsored by Medtronic

What is Stroke?

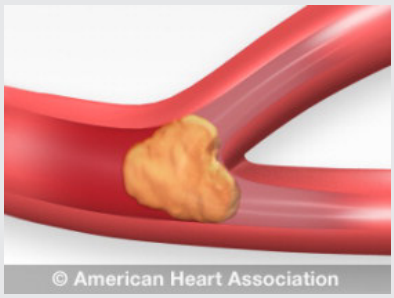
Stroke is a disease that affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. It is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain either bursts, ruptures or is blocked by a clot. As a result, the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs and pieces of the brain die.

Stroke Risk Factors

Approximately 80 percent of strokes can be prevented. Though some stroke risk factors are uncontrollable, such as age and race, other risk factors are in your control and making small lifestyle changes can reduce your stroke risk. For example, hypertension, which is the leading risk factor, can be controlled by eating a healthy diet, regularly physical activity, not smoking, and by taking prescribed medications. The American Heart Association identifies seven factors to control for ideal health. Life's Simple 7: be active, control cholesterol, eat a healthy diet, manage blood pressure, maintain a healthy weight, control blood sugar and don't smoke.

Types of Stroke



An **Ischemic Stroke** occurs when a clot or mass, often a fatty plaque deposit, clogs a blood vessel cutting off the blood flow to brain cells.

Ischemic strokes account for 87 percent of all stroke cases.

A **Hemorrhagic Stroke** results from a weakened vessel that ruptures and bleeds into the surrounding brain tissue.

The blood accumulates and forms a bruise within the brain tissue, compressing brain cells and causing them to die.

A **TIA or Transient Ischemic Attack** produces stroke-like symptoms. A TIA is caused by a clot; but unlike a stroke, the blockage is temporary and usually causes no permanent damage to the brain. TIAs are often called "mini-strokes".

Approximately 15 percent of all strokes occur after a TIA. **A TIA is a medical emergency!**

To learn more about stroke, visit StrokeAssociation.org.

Identifying Stroke

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the sudden signs and symptoms of a stroke. F.A.S.T. is:

Face Drooping Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.

Arm Weakness Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech Difficulty Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "the sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?

Time to call 911 If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and ensure they are transported to the hospital immediately by ambulance, the fastest way to get medical care.

Help save a life with the free F.A.S.T. mobile app

Last year 795,000 people suffered a stroke in the U.S. Be prepared to identify a stroke fast with the free F.A.S.T. mobile app.

You can use it to recognize and respond to the sudden warning signs of stroke and find stroke-certified hospitals near you.

For more information and to download the free F.A.S.T. mobile app, visit StrokeAssociation.org/WarningSigns.