

What is a Stroke?

A stroke happens when blood flow to your brain stops for some reason. It is a medical emergency because brain cells will start to die right away. There are 2 kinds of stroke. The most common kind is when a blood clot blocks the blood from getting to your brain. This is called ischemic stroke (“iss-kee-mic”). In the other kind, a blood vessel will break and blood will leak into the brain. This is called a hemorrhagic stroke (“hem-or-rage-ic”). Sometimes people can have “little” strokes where the blood might be kept only briefly from moving through the brain. These are called “TIAs” for transient ischemic attack.

Who gets a stroke?

Anyone of any age can get a stroke at any time. Most people think that it is something that might happen to an older person, but even babies can have a stroke.

What are the Warning Signs?

ANY of these symptoms could be a stroke:

- ❖ Sudden weakness in your face, arm, or leg – especially if only on one side
 - Ask the person to smile – if one side of the face does not match the other, this could be an indication of stroke
 - Ask the person to try to lift both arms straight up. If they cannot lift both arms, this could be an indication of a stroke.
- ❖ Horrible and sudden headache with no known cause
- ❖ Sudden confusion
- ❖ Trouble talking (or talking that does not make sense)
- ❖ Trouble seeing with one or both eyes
- ❖ Trouble walking – especially when you cannot walk using both sides of your body equally
- ❖ Dizziness or loss of balance
- ❖ Suddenly being uncoordinated when you have never had trouble before

What should you do?

You need to get help immediately. Sometimes the damage from a stroke can be significantly reduced if you get help in time. Call 911 immediately – a stroke can be life-threatening. If you are the one having the problem, do not drive.

What will they do at the hospital?

They will probably give you medicine right away. If it is a blood clot, there is medicine to help dissolve the clot. Timing is **very** important. You need to get help as soon as possible so that you will not lose brain cells when the blood cannot reach your brain. The doctors in the hospital will run tests to determine where the stroke has occurred in your brain and what kind of stroke it is.

Online Resources on Stroke

Georgia Division of Public Health

http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/epi/cdiee/CDIEE%20Data%20Summaries%202007/2007_Stroke_Data_Summary.pdf (GA stats)

American Stroke Association

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3030387>

Spanish: <http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3030382>

Medline

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/stroke.html>

Spanish: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/stroke.html>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stroke/DS00150>

WebMD

<http://www.webmd.com/stroke/guide/stroke-overview-facts>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/stroke/>

Spanish: http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/library/fs_strokesigns_spanish.htm

Give me 5 for Stroke

<http://www.giveme5forstroke.org/>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/knowstroke.htm>

Spanish: http://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/trastornos/ataque_cerebral.htm

American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/heartdisease/basics/290.html>

Spanish: <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdoces/home/common/heartdisease/basics/290.html>



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