

LET'S TALK ABOUT STROKE, TIA AND WARNING SIGNS

What is a stroke?

Stroke is the no. 3 cause of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in America. It occurs when a blood vessel bringing blood and oxygen to the brain gets blocked or ruptures and 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 a constant supply of blood, oxygen and nutrients to work properly. When the blood flow is blocked, you can have a stroke or TIA.

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 the same as those of a stroke, but they usually last only a few minutes. About 15 percent of strokes are preceded by TIAs, so don't ignore a TIA. Call 9-1-1 or seek emergency medical attention immediately!

Isn't stroke hopeless?

No. The good news about stroke is that it's largely preventable. Research has shown that you can reduce your stroke risk by living a healthy lifestyle — controlling high blood pressure; not smoking; eating a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet; being physically active; maintaining a healthy body weight; managing diabetes; drinking moderately or not at all, etc.

The other good news is that more than 5.8 million people who have had strokes are alive today! And much is being done to fight strokes. For example, the FDA's approval of the clot-dissolving drug tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) to treat stroke is an advance because tPA can stop a stroke in progress and reduce disability. But to be eligible for tPA, you must seek emergency treatment right away and have a clot-caused stroke.



Lane
Stroke Education Program
of Lane Regional Medical Center

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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.
- 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?