

What is a stroke?

A **stroke** is a brain attack.

It happens when the blood supply to part of your brain is restricted. Blood carries essential nutrients and oxygen to your brain and without blood your brain cells can be damaged or die. This damage can have different effects, depending which part of the brain is affected.

Know the different types of strokes:

Hemorrhagic Stroke (*Bleeding*)

This occurs when a blood vessel within the brain ruptures and causes bleeding in and around the affected area.

Ischaemic Stroke (*Clot*)

This is caused by a blood clot which obstructs the flow of blood to the brain, which is also known as a cerebral thrombosis.

Transient ischaemic attack (*TIA*)

A TIA or a mini-stroke mimics the symptoms of a stroke, except that the symptoms last for a short period of time and is temporary. A TIA, though temporary, is still very serious as it is a sign of a problem that needs attention, and pre-empts a stroke, if the problem is not taken care of.

Understanding Stroke:

Stroke is one of the top 3 causes of death in the world and one of the leading causes of disability. Yet, few people know what a stroke is, how to recognise the symptoms of a stroke, and what to do to reduce the impact of a stroke in the victim. A stroke can cause permanent loss of movement on the affected side of the body, loss of coherent speech and can affect your memory.

Recognising the symptoms of a stroke and how you can help:

By educating yourself, your family members and friends on quickly identifying the symptoms of a stroke, you can play an important role in reducing the impact of a stroke on the victim.

Stroke is caused when blood is no longer flowing to the brain. It is important the right medical treatment is given as quickly as possible.

What are the effects of a stroke?

The effects will vary from person to person, depending on which area of the brain was injured.

Frequently the effects are:

- Paralysis or weakness involving the face, arm and leg on one side of the body
- Difficulty with speech or inability to communicate clearly
- Difficulty swallowing or eating
- Loss of bladder or bowel movement
- Loss or impairment of sensation
- Partial loss of vision on one side
- Partial or complete loss of memory and limited concentration
- Loss of emotional control-mood changes, fatigue, depression, frustration & severe headache

DID YOU KNOW....

- 80% of strokes could have been prevented?
- any people who suffer a "mini stroke" are not even aware that they suffered a stroke?
- every 3 seconds someone suffers a stroke?
- every 4 minutes someone dies from a stroke?
- stroke does not discriminate between age, gender or creed?

Misconceptions on Stroke:

- Many communities still believe that a stroke victim is bewitched
- Women are immune to having a stroke
- Many believe that only the elderly are susceptible to a stroke
- Stroke is not hereditary
- Mini-strokes do not need treatment
- Smoking does not affect your chances of having a stroke

Preventative measures:

It is estimated that 1 in 6 people will suffer a stroke and occurs every 3 seconds around the world. It is estimated that every 4 minutes someone dies from a stroke. Up to 80 percent of strokes can be prevented:

You can reduce your chances of having a stroke, by following a healthier lifestyle, and recognising your personal risk factors.

Diet and Nutrition:

Following a healthy eating plan, and maintaining a healthy weight greatly reduces your chances of chronic diseases and stroke.

Exercise:

Physical exercise and regular medical checkups help to ensure your body is functioning at its peak.

High Blood Pressure:

It is estimated that more people suffer from High Blood Pressure without even realising it. Regular medical checkups, monitoring and controlling blood pressure helps reduce your chances of a stroke.

Cholesterol:

It is important to have your cholesterol checked regularly and where necessary to control the cholesterol levels in your body. Cholesterol is a leading cause of blockages and problems in the arteries that carry blood through your body.

Alcohol:

Alcohol can increase blood pressure and thus increases the risk of stroke. Drinking in moderation reduces your chances of a stroke.

Smoking:

Smoking doubles your chances of a stroke. Kicking the habit is good for you, and your family, as secondary smoke is just as bad as smoking, and increases the chances of family members suffering a stroke.