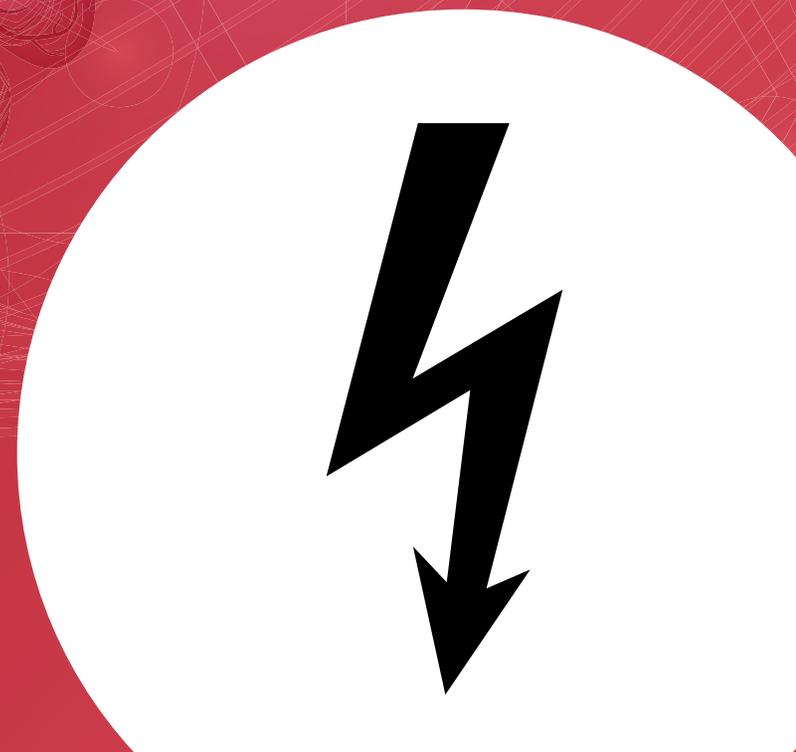
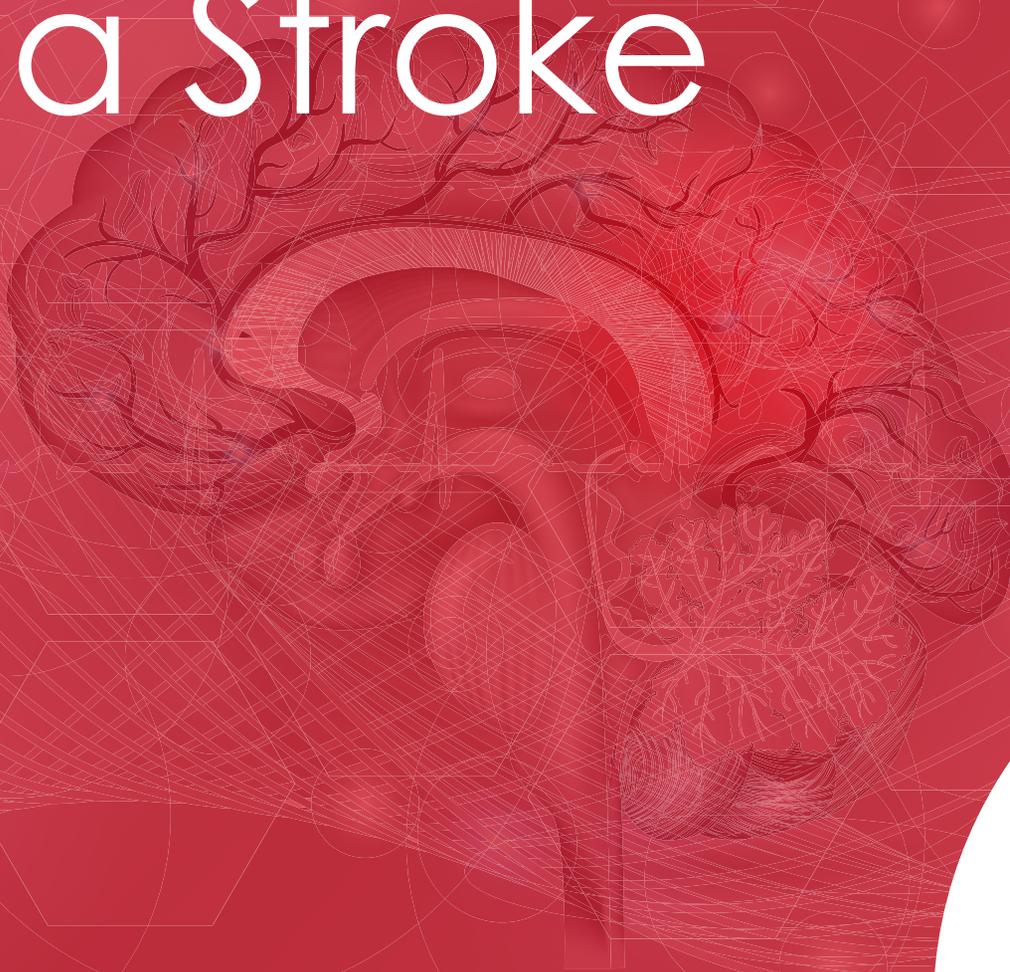


Warning Signs of a Stroke



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Introduction

Recognizing stroke symptoms early is a key factor for recovery. Patients who received care more than 3 hours after their first symptoms often experience more disability than those who received care sooner. A stroke essentially impairs blood supply to the brain, which is why timing is crucial.

To help you or a loved one receive needed care as soon as possible, we will review:

- What Is a Stroke?
 - Types of strokes
 - Common warning signs
 - Physical effects of a stroke
- Hospital & Rehab
 - Hospital Care
 - Rehabilitation
 - Home Care
- Stroke Prevention
 - Lifestyle changes
 - Stroke risk factors
- Tips for Stroke Caregivers

We hope you find this guide helpful in understanding strokes and what you can do about them.

The most important thing to remember when reviewing this guide is that every stroke is different. Everyone who experiences a stroke will be affected in different ways. However, there are some preventative measures that all adults can take to reduce their risk of stroke.

What Is a Stroke?

Types of Strokes

During a stroke, the brain's blood supply is disrupted. Without the oxygen and nutrients supplied by blood, brain cells start to die within a matter of minutes.

There are 2 ways that the blood supply can become disrupted, which characterize the different types of strokes.

Ischemic: This type of stroke occurs when blood supply is cut off from the brain, usually by a clot. Nearly 87% of all strokes are ischemic. Clots can form elsewhere in the body and travel to the brain, where they get stuck in small blood vessels (embolic), or they can form within arteries that supply blood to the brain (thrombotic).

There are also transient ischemic attacks (TIA), in which blood flow is temporarily blocked to the brain — usually for less than 5 minutes. These ischemic attacks are sometimes referred to as a ministroke because they mimic stroke symptoms, but the symptoms last less than 24 hours. Half of all strokes occur within days of TIA, making it a good indicator that an individual will experience a full stroke.

Hemorrhagic: This type of stroke occurs when a blood vessel bursts. This may be caused by a brain aneurysm burst or a leaking blood vessel. During a hemorrhagic stroke, there is bleeding within brain tissue (intracerebral) or between the brain the skull (subarachnoid).

As brain cells begin to die as a result of either type of stroke, abilities that are controlled by the area of the brain are lost, resulting in loss of mobility, cognition, or other abilities. The impact of the stroke depends on how much blood flow is cut off to an area of the brain.

Stroke Stats at a Glance

- Strokes are responsible for 1 in 20 deaths in the United States.
- Every 40 seconds, someone in America has a stroke.
- 1 in 4 stroke sufferers will experience another stroke.
- Stroke is the leading cause of serious long-term disability.

Common Warning Signs

To remember some of these signs, you may have heard for the “FAST” acronym.

Face



Does their smile droop?

Arm



Can they raise their arms up equally?

Speech



Do they have slurred speech?

Time



Act as soon as possible

An individual may **SUDDENLY EXHIBIT** one or several stroke **WARNING SIGNS.**

While this is a great way to help you remember stroke signs in a pinch, but there are several other warning signs of a stroke, including:

Numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body

- Vision problems
- Dizziness, loss of balance, or trouble walking
- Severe headache without cause
- Difficulty swallowing

An individual may exhibit one or several of these signs. Typically, they come on suddenly and without warning.

Signs in Women vs Men

Women may experience different signs of a stroke than men. And they have a higher risk of stroke due to pregnancy, birth control, and hormone replacement therapy. Some women may even incorrectly identify menopause as the cause of stroke symptoms.

Here are some symptoms that women may experience during a stroke:

- Hiccups
- Chest pain
- Fainting
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Hallucination
- Irritation
- Seizures

Call 9-1-1 immediately upon observing any of these stroke warning signs. Time is of the essence and could literally make the difference between life and death. Once you arrive at the hospital, state that you think you are having a stroke to help alert physicians to get you treatment fast.



Physical Effects of a Stroke

Even after undergoing hospital treatment, stroke survivors may experience physical side effects, including the following:

Paralysis: Stroke survivors may become paralyzed or have difficulty controlling their muscles. This paralysis may occur on one side of your body or just affect certain muscle groups. By working with a physical therapist, individuals may still be able to get dressed, eat, bathe, and walk around.

Difficulty speaking or swallowing: If a stroke affects muscles in the mouth, throat, or around the face, then individuals may have a hard time talking or eating. Eating requires a lot of muscles working together to chew and swallow food. However, this function may be restored by working with a speech pathologist.

Physical pain: After a stroke, a senior may still have pain or strange sensations in areas of the body affected by the stroke. It's also common to be sensitive to changes in temperature after a stroke, but this may improve over time. This pain, however, is difficult to treat because it is a result of brain injury and not a problem with the area of the body experiencing the pain.

Memory loss: Because a stroke occurs in the brain, it is extremely common for stroke survivors to experience memory loss. A stroke could also impair judgement, cognitive function, and decision-making abilities.

Emotional changes: An individual may have difficulty controlling their emotions after a stroke. That's because emotions are regulated solely by the brain. It is common to develop depression after suffering from a stroke.

Behavioral changes: You might notice behavioral changes in someone who has experienced a stroke. They may become more impulsive, less concerned with their personal appearance, or become moody and withdrawn.

Many of these symptoms depend on where the stroke occurred in the brain. For example, if a stroke occurred on the right side of the brain, you may experience judgement problems, while a stroke on the left side might impact your ability to do math, read, or talk.

Physical Effects at a Glance

- Paralysis
- Difficulty speaking or swallowing
- Physical pain
- Memory loss
- Emotional changes
- Behavioral changes

Hospitalization & Rehab

Stroke care should begin as soon as possible. The care plan for someone who suffers a stroke will include hospital admission and care, rehabilitation, and, potentially, home care. Let's take a look at what to expect from each type of care.

Hospital Care

When you or a loved one arrives at the emergency room, doctors will most likely ask about your medical history and when you started experiencing symptoms. They may perform a brief physical exam to check for stroke symptoms. A doctor may order a brain scan (CT scan or MRI).

If you receive treatment within 3 hours of the first symptoms, doctors may prescribe a medication called tPA. This medication helps restore blood flow to the brain. However, it can have dangerous side effects and is not recommended for hemorrhagic strokes.

After being treated in the emergency room, you will be admitted into the hospital for more intensive care. Your hospital care may include:

- Monitoring your heart for at least 24 hours
- Keeping you on bed rest
- Administering medication to prevent blood clots
- Occupational, physical, or speech therapy
- Additional diagnostic tests

Here are some tips for a successful recovery:

- Start your stroke rehab program as soon as possible
- Bring family members or close friends with you to therapy to provide support and encouragement
- Ask for help if you begin to feel depressed, discouraged, or helpless
- Don't give up on your care

Rehabilitation

Stroke recovery can be a long and difficult path, but many individuals are able to recover some lost functions. The permanent effects of a stroke depend on where the stroke happened in the brain and how many brain cells were killed. The recovery time may take years, and it greatly depends on how diligent a senior is in their rehab exercises.

To begin the long road to recovery, individuals will undergo rehabilitation, or therapy, to help them regain control of their body. Typically, you will go to an in-patient rehabilitation center where you will receive daily therapy exercises. Those exercises may also be coupled with medications, lifestyle changes, and other types of therapy as needed.

You will be released from the in-patient rehab center, but your rehabilitation doesn't stop there! You will often be required to attend out-patient rehab sessions or continue to perform physical therapy in your own home.

Some individuals, however, will not be strong enough to receive care in a rehab facility. These individuals may be better suited for care in a skilled nursing facility, where they can also receive 24/7 nursing care.

How to stay motivated during rehabilitation:

- Set reasonable goals
- Track your progress
- Practice positive self talk
- Get support from family
- Stick to a schedule for exercises
- Engage in hobbies you enjoy

Home Care

Even after being discharged from the hospital and sent home from rehab, you or a loved one will most likely still be suffering from some health complications, and you will still have rehab exercises to continue. Approximately 65% of individuals who have a stroke will need specialized care. That's where home care comes in.

Home care allows these individuals to remain at home and continue their daily routine. Caregivers can help with personal care, housekeeping, and companionship to help seniors who may not be able to perform basic tasks on their own anymore.

Caring Senior Service

Our professional caregivers can help you get to and from appointments with doctors or physical therapists. They can also help you perform physical therapy exercises at home. Plus, our meal preparation services can also help you get the nutrients you need and avoid excess salts and sugars.

Caring Senior Service caregivers are trained to report any changes to their supervisor which would include potential signs of a stroke in case you suffer from another one. We can be there to help you remember to take medications on time and at the correct dosage.

In addition, our 43-point Home Safety Assessment can help identify areas in the home that could be potential dangers to seniors who have recently suffered a stroke.

Stroke Recovery at a Glance:

- 4 million stroke survivors in America live with impairments
- Up to 30% of stroke survivors are permanently disabled
- Only 10% of stroke survivors recover almost completely
- 25% of people who've had a stroke recover with minor impairments and don't require special care
- Stroke survivors recover at a faster rate during the first 3 months

Stroke Prevention

Surprisingly, 80% of strokes are preventable. That means there is a lot seniors and their loved ones can do to reduce their chance of stroke.

Lifestyle Changes

Your lifestyle plays a big role in determining your risk of stroke. Individuals who have high blood pressure are at greatest risk, followed by those struggling with high cholesterol, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and smoking.

- **Maintain a healthy diet.** It's important to manage your cholesterol and extra fat that may be circulating in the blood. A healthy diet can help you reduce plaque buildup.
- **Exercise on a regular basis.** Exercise helps keep your heart in shape, along with the rest of your body. Plus, it can help reduce high blood pressure and manage obesity.
- **Avoid tobacco products completely.** Tobacco puts extra stress on the heart, and chemicals found in cigarettes narrow arteries and raise blood pressure.
- **Manage chronic conditions:** Chronic conditions, like diabetes, can have a big impact on your risk of stroke. Meet with your doctor to ensure that these conditions are properly managed.
- **Attend doctor checkups regularly:** You never know if you are truly healthy until you get a full checkup from your doctor. Your doctor may be able to detect early stroke risk factors and help you start managing them early.
- **Avoid heavy drinking.** Alcohol can affect your risk of stroke. Limit your alcohol intake to moderate or low levels.
- **Reduce stress.** Stress can contribute to a stroke. Try to do activities that are relaxing and avoid high-stress situations if possible.





Stroke Risk Factors

However, there are other stroke risk factors that simply can't be prevented.

- **Race and ethnicity** affect your chance of having a stroke. For example, African Americans have the highest death rate due to strokes.
- **Genetics** also play a role. Hemorrhage strokes, especially, can be caused by a genetic condition called arteriovenous malformation (AVM). Individuals with this condition are at a much higher risk of brain bleeding.
- **Age** is a major contributor to strokes. The older you get, the higher chance you have. In fact, 66% of strokes occur in seniors over 65 years old.

Remember that strokes can still happen to anyone regardless of age, life-style, or genetics. While you can take certain steps to prevent them, there's no guaranteeing that you will avoid a stroke.

Tips for Stroke Caregivers

Being a stroke caregiver can be a very demanding responsibility. However, it can also be extremely rewarding. Because a stroke affects everyone differently, your responsibilities may vary. But here are some general guidelines to help you care for a stroke survivor.

- Learn as much information as you can about your loved one's stroke. Ask your loved one questions, and try and get in touch with their doctors or the rehabilitation team. The more information you know about their stroke symptoms, side effects, and rehabilitation plan, the better!
- Have a list on hand of all medications your loved one is taking along with dosage instructions. This can help you ensure that they are executing their care plan.
- Be patient! Caring for a stroke survivor can be difficult when you don't feel like they are making progress. Remember that it can take years for someone to fully recover from the effects of a stroke. Many skills need to be relearned, which takes time. Try not to get frustrated or discouraged.
- Find a support group to help you lessen the load. This group could include care team members, respite caregivers, doctors, church members, neighbors, or family friends. In addition, there are several online communities and forums where you can find support from other stroke caregivers.
- Don't forget to take care of yourself. While your loved one needs care, you need it too! Schedule time for yourself to do things that you enjoy and to get a break, even if it's just for a few minutes.

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Caring for our seniors is perhaps the greatest responsibility we have. Those who walked before us have given so much and made possible the life we all enjoy.

-John Hoeven

We hope that this guide has helped you understand the warning signs and effects of a stroke. If you have additional questions about how to care for a loved one who has experienced a stroke, reach out to the Caring Senior Service team. Our experts are ready to help!

Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/facts.htm>

<https://www.geisinger.org/health-and-wellness/wellness-articles/2018/05/08/14/57/what-happens-inside-the-body-during-a-stroke>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/stroke/symptoms-causes/syc-20350113>

<https://www.rd.com/health/conditions/stroke-symptoms-in-women/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/stroke/recovery#complications>

***This Content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.*



Caring Senior Service is a non-medical home care company that helps seniors remain happy, healthy, and at home. We rely on our GreatCare Method to offer quality care to every client. This method involves quality caregivers, offering tailored care solutions, and maintaining active involvement with clients, their families, and their healthcare team. For over 25 years, clients have trusted us to help their loved ones age in place.

For more information, contact Caring Senior Service
at cssmarketing@caringinc.com

Want to explore additional resources? Click below

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RESOURCES**

