

# Warning Signs of Stroke

Learn the many warning signs of a stroke. Act **FAST** and **CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY** at any sign of a stroke. Use **FAST** to remember warning signs:

**F** **FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?



**A** **ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?



**S** **SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?



**T** **TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

**NOTE THE TIME WHEN ANY SYMPTOMS FIRST APPEAR.** If given within *three hours* of the first symptom, there is an FDA-approved clot-buster medication that may reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

**LEARN ABOUT MORE SIGNS OF STROKE AT**



National Stroke Association's mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of stroke by developing compelling education and programs focused on prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and support for all impacted by stroke.

A stroke is a brain attack that occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or a blood vessel breaks, interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. Brain cells begin to die.

**CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY IF YOU SEE ONE OR MORE SIGNS OF A STROKE.**



**1-800-STROKES**  
(787-6537)

**www.stroke.org**

All publications are reviewed by National Stroke Association's Publications Committee.

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## Stroke Prevention



Start reducing risk now by following prevention guidelines inside.



[www.stroke.org/symp](http://www.stroke.org/symp)

# Stroke Prevention Guidelines

**Start reducing risk now.** Although stroke can happen to anyone, certain risk factors can increase chances of a stroke. However, many strokes can be prevented. It is important to manage personal risk and know how to recognize and respond to stroke signs and symptoms. **Talk to a healthcare professional and follow these guidelines.** Visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) for a list of all risk factors.

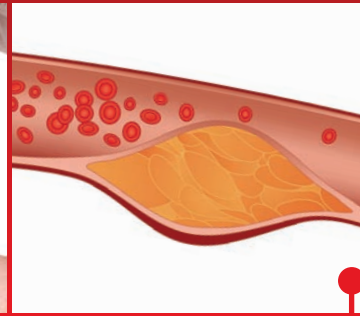
**Know blood pressure** (hypertension) High blood pressure is a major stroke risk factor if left untreated. Have blood pressure checked yearly by a doctor or at health fairs, a local pharmacy or supermarket or with an automatic blood pressure machine.

**Stop smoking** Smoking doubles the risk of stroke. It damages blood vessel walls, speeds up artery clogging, raises blood pressure and makes the heart work harder.

**Know cholesterol levels** Cholesterol is a fatty substance in blood that is made by the body. It also comes in food. High cholesterol levels can clog arteries and cause a stroke. See a doctor if your total cholesterol level is more than 200.

**Identify atrial fibrillation** (Afib) Afib is an abnormal heartbeat that can increase stroke risk by 500%. Afib can cause blood to pool in the heart and may form a clot and cause a stroke. A doctor must diagnose and treat Afib.

**TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK (TIA)** is a temporary episode of stroke-like symptoms that can last a few minutes to 24 hours but usually causes no permanent damage or disability. TIA and stroke symptoms are the same. Recognizing and treating a TIA can reduce stroke risk. Up to 40 percent of people who experience a TIA may have a stroke.



**Manage exercise/diet** Excess weight strains the circulatory system. Exercise five times a week. Maintain a diet low in calories, salt, saturated and trans fats and cholesterol. Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

**Control alcohol use** Alcohol use has been linked to stroke in many studies. Most doctors recommend not drinking or drinking only in moderation - no more than two drinks each day.

**Control diabetes** Many people with diabetes have health problems that are also stroke risk factors. A doctor and dietician can help manage diabetes.

**Treat circulation problems** Fatty deposits can block arteries carrying blood to the brain and lead to a stroke. Other problems such as sickle cell disease or severe anemia should be treated.

**MANAGE PERSONAL RISK.** Fill out the Stroke Risk Scorecard and discuss with a doctor. Download at [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org).

**Stroke Risk Scorecard**  
Each box that applies to you equals 1 point. Total your score at the bottom of each column and compare with the stroke risk levels on the back.

Risk Factor	High Risk	Caution
Blood Pressure	> 140/90 or I don't know	120-139/80-89 or 200-239
Cholesterol	> 240 or I don't know	120-139/80-89 or 200-239
Diabetes	Yes	Borderline
Smoking	I still smoke	I'm trying to quit
Atrial Fibrillation	I have an irregular heartbeat	I don't know
Diet	I am overweight	I am slightly overweight
Exercise	I am a couch potato	I exercise sometimes
I have stroke in my family	Yes	Not sure

Score (each box=1)