



What is stroke and TIA?

A stroke occurs when blood supply to the brain is reduced or blood vessels burst. It is the fifth leading cause of death and the leading cause of adult disability. Damage from stroke can affect the entire body resulting in mild to severe disabilities including the inability to move your arm, leg or both, and problems with thinking, speaking, swallowing, and emotions.

A TIA, or transient ischemic attack, is similar to a stroke in that there is also a blockage of blood flow to the brain. However, in TIA, the blockage (or reduction of blood flow) occurs for shorter a duration of time and therefore, there is no permanent damage. The symptoms of a TIA are the same as those of a stroke, but they usually only last a few minutes to a few hours.

Am I at risk for a stroke/TIA?

A stroke comes on suddenly and can happen to anyone at any time. As you age, your chances of suffering a stroke increase, but even children, teenagers, and pregnant women can suffer a stroke.

People who have heart disease, high blood pressure, or a prior stroke/TIA are at greater risk for having a stroke. About 15% of major strokes are preceded by TIA. African Americans, Alaska Natives, American Indians, and Hispanic adults are also at greater risk.

What are the common signs and symptoms?

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, usually on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden dizziness, trouble walking, or loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Why is stroke an emergency?

Every minute counts. The longer blood flow is cut off to the brain, the greater the damage. The treatments for stroke must occur within a few hours.

If you think that you or someone you know is having a stroke or you are unsure call 9-1-1 immediately.

What can I do to prevent a stroke?

Leading a healthy lifestyle can decrease your chances of stroke. Here are the action steps you can take to reduce your risk:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Keep your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol under good control
- Limit alcohol and smoking (quitting is better)
- Stop recreational drug use

Talk to your doctor or nurse about what you can do to prevent strokes.

Where can I learn more?

- Visit <http://careguides.med.umich.edu/stroke> to access patient education materials U-M stroke experts recommend.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Adapted from: NINDS. [What You Need to Know About Stroke](#) and CDC. [Know the Facts About Stroke](#)

Authors: Ruti Volk, MSI, Anne Mcleod RN, MSN
Reviewers: Jessica Roberts, MSN, FNP-c

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 07/2019