

# Overview

## Stroke

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A stroke is a life-threatening medical condition. It happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off by a blockage or a ruptured blood vessel.

Strokes are a medical emergency and urgent treatment is essential.

The sooner a person gets treatment for a stroke, the less damage is likely to happen.

### If you suspect that you or someone else is having a stroke:

- phone 999 or 112 immediately
- ask for an ambulance

## Symptoms of a stroke

You can recognise a stroke and know what to do by using the word FAST.

### FAST stands for:

- Face - your face may have dropped on one side, you may not be able to smile, or your mouth or eyelid may droop.
- Arms - you may not be able to lift both arms and keep them there because of weakness or numbness in 1 arm.

- Speech - your speech may be slurred or garbled, or you may not be able to talk at all.
- Time - it's time to dial 999 immediately if you have any of these signs or symptoms.

## [Symptoms of a stroke](#)

## Causes of a stroke

Like all organs, your brain needs oxygen and nutrients provided by blood to work properly. If the blood supply is restricted or stopped, brain cells begin to die. This can lead to brain injury, disability and possibly death.

There are 2 main types of strokes:

- ischaemic
- haemorrhagic

Ischaemic is where the blood supply is stopped because of a clot blocking a blood vessel. About 85% stroke cases are ischaemic strokes.

Haemorrhagic is where a blood vessel that supplies the brain bursts.

## [Causes of a stroke](#)

## Transient ischaemic attack (TIA)

A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) is where the blood supply to the brain is temporarily interrupted.

This is often called a mini-stroke. It can last between a few minutes and several hours.

TIAs should be treated urgently. They're often a warning sign you're at risk of having a full stroke soon. Get medical advice as soon as possible, even if your symptoms go away.

## [Learn more about TIA](#)

## Underlying conditions

Certain conditions increase the risk of having a stroke, including:

- [atrial fibrillation](#)
- [high blood pressure \(hypertension\)](#)
- heart valve disease
- disease of your blood vessels ('atherosclerosis' or peripheral vascular disease)
- [diabetes](#)
- [high cholesterol](#)

## Treating a stroke

Treatment depends on the type of stroke, the cause of the stroke and the part of the brain affected.

Strokes are usually treated with medicine to:

- prevent and dissolve blood clots
- reduce the risk of bleeding
- reduce blood pressure
- reduce cholesterol levels

In some cases, you may need a procedure to remove blood clots.

If you have a stroke, you may need surgery to treat brain swelling and reduce the risk of further bleeding.

Learn more about [diagnosing strokes](#) and [treating strokes](#).

## Recovering from a stroke

You may be left with long-term problems after having a stroke.

Rehabilitation can be a long process and you may never fully recover. You might need support adjusting to living with the effects of your stroke.

You may need help with your daily activities.

[Recovering from a stroke](#)

## Preventing a stroke

It's important to manage any condition that increases your risk of stroke. For example, lowering high blood pressure or cholesterol levels with medicine.

You can reduce your risk of having a stroke by:

- [eating a healthy diet](#)
- [being physically active](#)
- [drinking alcohol in moderation](#)
- [not smoking](#)

It's important to manage any condition that increases your risk of stroke. For example, lowering high blood pressure or cholesterol levels with medicine.

If you've had a stroke or TIA in the past, your risk of having another stroke is much higher.

[Preventing strokes](#)

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