

Some things About Stroke and Mini-stroke

About 795,000 strokes occur in the United States every year. More than 9.5 million people, ages 20 and older in the United States report having had a stroke or Mini-stroke. Though the Stroke is the fifth most common cause of death in this country, it's a major cause of serious disability. Few people survive a stroke without some degree of impairment.

An ischemic stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain stops. A temporary blockage of blood flow to the brain, known as transient ischemic attack or TIA can cause range of unsettling symptoms, including slurred speech, arm or leg weakness. This TIA appears suddenly, but usually lasts less than five minutes, which is why TIAs are often ignored or missed. TIAs are often called mini strokes.

Strokes can occur at any age. More strokes occur in older people due to traditional risk factors which increase with age. There is an increase in the strokes incidence in the 45 to 65 age group, which is most likely due to risk factors like high blood pressure at younger age, a sedentary lifestyle or poor diet.

We are also hearing about environmental issues like micro plastics that may be a risk factor affecting us all.

Mini stroke or TIA can be a harbinger of a future stroke. Nearly one in five people who have suspected TIA will experience a full-blown stroke within three months. Sometimes what appears to be a TIA or mini stroke is more serious than it seems. Even symptoms that go away may actually be a stroke.

According to American heart Association, two out of every five people with a suspected TIA who get an appropriate brain image test find out that they actually had a stroke. That's why it is so important to be aware of the symptoms and seek emergency care right away.

High blood pressure is the strongest preventable risk factor, playing a role in at least 50% of strokes. All modifiable risk factors for heart attack also elevate the risk of stroke and mini stroke, including diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, lack of physical exercise, alcohol intake, poor quality sleep, and stress.

Atrial fibrillation, which is a rhythm disorder of the heart is another major risk factor for stroke.

SYMPTOMS OF A TIA OR STROKE: Different areas of the brain have different functions, so the symptoms that occurred during a TIA or a stroke depend on the part of your brain in which blood flow is disrupted. American Stroke Association has recognized a mnemonic BEFAST as a guide to symptom recognition.

This referred to B for loss of BALANCE, headache, and dizziness, E for EYES(blurred vision), F for FACE(one side of the face is drooping),A for ARM(Arm or Leg weakness), S for SPEECH(Speech difficulty) and T for TIME (Time to call for ambulance immediately).

BALANCE: This symptom can be tricky because many other conditions can cause dizziness or balance issues, including low blood sugar, low blood pressure or inner ear problems. Balance problems caused by a TIA or a stroke, often make it difficult to stand up, and you may fall to one side or other. This symptom is often associated by other symptoms, including speech, disturbances, or vision problems.

EYES: Visual symptoms can manifest in different ways. The most common symptom is not being able to see from one or both eyes. At times, people describe the experience as seeing a dark gray shade that blocks half or all of their vision. Blurred or double vision can also occur.

Sometimes, people mistakenly go to an eye doctor first instead of going to the emergency room **FACE:** The face can droop on one side during a TIA or a stroke. Usually the corner of the mouth appears pull down, and the person isn't able to smile. **ARM OR LEG WEAKNESS;** This symptom tends to affect arms more often than legs and usually occur on one side of the body. .

People may describe the feeling as numbness or tingling rather than weakness. Sometimes the entire one side of the body is affected. **SPEECH:** Slurred or garbled speech is the most common presentation. But in some cases, people struggle to find words or aren't able to understand what other people are saying. This defect also extends to writing and typing, including texting on a smart phone.

This deficit is caused by a lack of blood flow in the language area of the brain. **TIME:** The final letter T underscores the importance of getting to an emergency room for assessment as soon as possible, even if your symptoms have disappeared.

AHA guidelines call for imaging of the blood vessels in the brain and neck, along with blood test to rule out things that sometimes can make a TIA or a stroke such as low blood sugar or an infection. Timing is crucial, since urgent intervention during a stroke can abort or minimize long-term complications of strokes

Headache can be a symptom of stroke. The type of stroke associated with a sudden intense severe headache is caused by Subarachnoid hemorrhage, which is caused by a ruptured artery between the brain and the skull. These strokes comprise only about 5% of all strokes. If you do get the worst headache of your life, call 911 immediately

HOW TO PREVENT A STROKE/ TIA: -Keep your blood pressure, blood, sugar, blood, lipid levels, and body weight in a normal range -Eat a healthy diet -Sit less, move more -Do not smoke -Do not abuse alcohol or drugs -Get an adequate amount of sleep -Keep stress to a minimum -If you have arrhythmia such as atrial fibrillation or chronic kidney disease, work closely with your physician to minimize your stroke risk .

Importantly **CHEWING AN ASPIRIN APPLY TO SUSPECTED HEART ATTACKS, BUT NOT TO STROKES. IF YOU HAVE STROKE LIKE SYMPTOMS, TAKING AN ASPIRIN IS NOT RECOMMENDED.** Taking an aspirin when you are having a stroke may impact the ability to give you certain emergency treatments in the emergency room.

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