

Stroke/CVA Condition Information

Body Part

Brain

Condition:

Stroke or cerebrovascular accident (CVA)

Summary

Stroke is the term for the interruption of blood supply to the brain, resulting in damage or death of brain cells. There are different ways the blood supply to the brain can become interrupted.

Below are the 3 different types of stroke:

- **Ischaemic stroke.** This is where an artery in the brain is blocked due to either a clot, a piece of fatty material or plaque. Often a clot formed in the heart travels through the blood vessels and eventually lodges in the brain. Ischaemic strokes are the most common type of stroke and account for 80% of all strokes.
- **Hemorrhagic stroke.** This is where a blood vessel in the brain bursts, resulting in bleeding inside the brain.
- **Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA).** This is where the blood supply to the brain is blocked temporarily and resolves itself within minutes or hours. This can be a warning sign for future strokes.

All of these types of stroke result in the brain not receiving enough blood to provide the oxygen and nutrients it needs, which results in brain cell damage or death. The type and amount of impairment caused depends on the region of the brain affected. The severity of a stroke also depends on:

- Type of stroke
- Time it took to get treatment
- The time the brain had no blood flow
- Location of stroke
- Size of the damaged area in the brain
- Body functions controlled by the affected area of the brain

Symptoms:

It is recommended to use the FAST approach to identify strokes:

- Face: Has their face dropped?
- Arms: Can they lift both arms?
- Speech: Is their speech slurred? Can they understand you?
- Time: Time is critical. Call 000 if they show any of these signs.

There are common symptoms and presentations of stroke, which include:

- Motor impairments such as weakness or paralysis on one or both sides of the body
- Sensory impairments such as hot/cold changes, touch and pain, which usually occurs on one side of the body
- Loss of balance
- Difficulty swallowing
- Sudden and severe headache
- Loss of vision or blurred vision
- Personality or behaviour changes
- Fatigue
- Incontinence

Treatment:

Treatment of stroke includes medications to address different health issues, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, and other medications that are stroke specific. Exercise, dietary changes, speech therapy, occupational therapy, ophthalmology and sometimes surgical intervention are also used to treat stroke.

Exercise is an important component of rehabilitation. Generally the most recovery from a stroke is made in the early weeks and months after the event. The aim of an exercise rehabilitation program is to:

- Regain voluntary movement
- Increase general strength and activity to return to everyday tasks
- Reduce risk of falls
- Improve or maintain cardiovascular fitness
- Increase activity levels to prevent further complications

Prognosis:

The prognosis after a stroke is very different for everyone. Some people go on to fully recover from a stroke in weeks, months or years, while others go on to have long term or lifelong disabilities due to a stroke.

Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link:

<https://www.kauveryhospital.com/blog/k-way-health/neurology/types-of-strokes/>

