

STROKE 101:

What You Need to Know

- › **2 million brain cells** are lost per minute during a stroke.
- › **Every 10-minute delay** between arrival at the emergency department and the start of treatment may translate to a loss of 8 weeks of healthy life for a person with severe stroke.
- › **Nearly 800,000 Americans** have a new or recurrent stroke each year.
- › **No. 5** is where stroke ranks among the top causes of death in the U.S.
- › **No. 1** is where stroke ranks among the top causes of disability in the U.S.
- › **Up to 80%** of strokes may be prevented.

UNDERSTAND THE BASICS

To prevent a stroke, you need to understand why a stroke occurs. Stroke happens when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either clogged by a clot (ischemic stroke) or bursts (hemorrhagic stroke). This prevents part of the brain from getting the blood and oxygen it needs, so brain cells die.



KNOW YOUR RISKS

Certain risk factors **we cannot control** may contribute to a stroke, including:

- › **Age.** The chance of having a stroke approximately doubles every 10 years after age 55.
- › **Gender.** Approximately 55,000 more women than men have a stroke each year.
- › **Race.** Black people are at increased risk for stroke.
- › **Family history of stroke.** This can increase your risk of stroke up to 30%.
- › **Prior stroke.** This increases the likelihood of further strokes.

CONTROL COMMON RISK FACTORS

Other risk factors that **we can control** may contribute to a stroke, including:

- › Elevated blood pressure (> 130/80 mm Hg)
- › High total cholesterol
- › Atrial fibrillation or carotid/coronary artery disease
- › Uncontrolled diabetes
- › Being overweight
- › Physical inactivity
- › Smoking
- › Unhealthy sleep

These risk factors **can be controlled** through the following:

› **Managing blood pressure**



› **Controlling cholesterol**



› **Managing blood sugar**



› **Managing weight**



› **Maintaining a healthy diet**



› **Being more active**



› **Quitting smoking**



› **Getting healthy sleep**



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

You can stay ahead of stroke by controlling common risk factors and paying close attention to any changes in your health.

- › Seek medical advice early.
- › Watch for transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) or “mini-strokes,” which are shorter episodes of typical stroke symptoms. Call 911.
- › Be aware that some people experience barely noticeable warning signs or none at all.
- › Get regular checkups to catch health problems before they become serious.

And don't ignore these warning signs, even if they go away:

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

CALL 911

right away if you or someone else has any of these symptoms.

BE PROACTIVE IN YOUR OWN CARE

and assess your stroke risk today through our free online calculator, clevelandclinic.org/strokerisk.