

Stroke Symptoms

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



INDIAN ACADEMY OF
NEUROLOGY

A Public Information Initiative

Q. 1. What is a stroke?

Ans. A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, occurs when a clot blocks the blood supply to the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. You can greatly reduce your risk for stroke through lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medication.

Q. 2. What are the symptoms and signs of stroke?

Ans. The five most common symptoms and signs of stroke are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg.
- 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 and severe headache with no known cause.

Q. 3. What causes a stroke?

Ans. There are two major kinds of stroke.

The first, called an *ischemic stroke*, is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel or artery in the brain. About 80 percent of all strokes are ischemic.

The second, known as a *hemorrhagic stroke*, is caused by a blood vessel in the brain that breaks and bleeds into the brain. About 20 percent of strokes are hemorrhagic.

Q. 4. What kind of disabilities can result from a stroke?

Ans. Although stroke is a disease of the brain, it can affect the entire body. The effects range from mild to severe and can include paralysis, problems with thinking, problems with speaking, and emotional problems. Patients may also experience pain or numbness after a stroke.

Q. 5. How is it treated?

Ans. If you have a stroke, you may receive emergency care, treatment to prevent another stroke, rehabilitation to help you relearn the skills you may have lost because of the stroke, or all of the three.

In addition, lifestyle changes can help lower your risk for future strokes. Talk with your neurologist about the best ways to reduce your stroke risk.

Q. 6. Why is stroke treatment urgent?

Ans. In case of a stroke, every minute counts. The longer the blood flow is cut-off to the brain, the greater the damage. The most common kind of stroke, ischemic stroke, can be treated with a drug that dissolves clots blocking the blood flow. The window of opportunity to start treating stroke patients is four-and-a-half-hours. But a person needs to be at the hospital within 60 minutes of having a stroke to be evaluated and receive urgent treatment.

Q. 7. What should a bystander do?

Ans. If you believe someone is having a stroke – if he or she suddenly loses the ability to speak, or move an arm or leg on one side, or experiences facial paralysis on one side, call the ambulance immediately

and shift the patient to a nearby facility with CT scan. *“Time Saved is Brain Saved”*.

Q. 8. Why I need to act fast?

Ans. Ischemic strokes, the most common type of strokes, can be treated with a drug called t-PA (alteplase) that dissolves blood clots obstructing blood flow to the brain. The window of opportunity to start treating stroke patients is four-and-a-half hours, but to be evaluated and receive treatment, patients need to get to the hospital within 60 minutes.

Q. 9. What is the benefit of treatment?

Ans. A five-year study by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) found that some stroke patients who received t-PA within three hours of the beginning of stroke symptoms were 30 percent more likely to recover with little or no disability after three months.

Q. 10. What can I do to prevent a stroke?

Ans. The best treatment for stroke is prevention.

There are several risk factors that increase your chances of having a stroke:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Smoking. If you smoke – Quit.

If you have high blood pressure (BP), heart disease, diabetes, or high cholesterol, getting appropriate treatment and keeping them under control would greatly reduce your chances of having a stroke.

Disclaimer:

This brochure is for the general information of the public and the patients. People should not self-medicate themselves with the medicines and treatments mentioned here. Before taking any of the medications mentioned in the information brochure, please consult your neurologist.

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