

Learn to Spot the Signs of Stroke

A stroke is a medical emergency. It occurs when an artery, leading to the brain (or within the brain) is blocked or damaged. A clot can block an artery, or an artery can burst. This reduces or completely blocks blood flow to an area of the brain.

Without glucose and oxygen provided by the blood, brain cells may be permanently damaged. When part of the brain is injured, the part of the body it controls is affected.

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of disability (mobility, vision, speech).



What Are the Signs of Stroke?

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of stroke can help save your life or the life of someone around you. The simple acronym FAST can help you remember the signs that someone is having a stroke.

- **F**ace Drooping – Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- **A**rm Weakness – Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift down?
- **S**peech Difficulty – Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **T**ime to Call 911 – If you observe any of these signs, [call 911 immediately for emergency medical attention](#). Do not drive the person to the emergency room. Call 911. Emergency medical technicians begin life-saving treatment right away before the patient even reaches the hospital.

Some symptoms of a stroke include **SUDDEN**:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg – especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking, or trouble understanding
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or loss of coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

Again, if you or someone around you shows these signs and symptoms, call 911 right away for emergency medical attention. You could save a life!



How Can We Prevent Stroke?

The [National Stroke Association](#) reports that five healthy lifestyle habits can [prevent up to 80 percent of stroke](#):

1. Eating a healthy diet
2. Maintaining a healthy weight
3. Regular exercise
4. Avoiding tobacco
5. Consuming alcohol in moderation or not at all

Know your Numbers

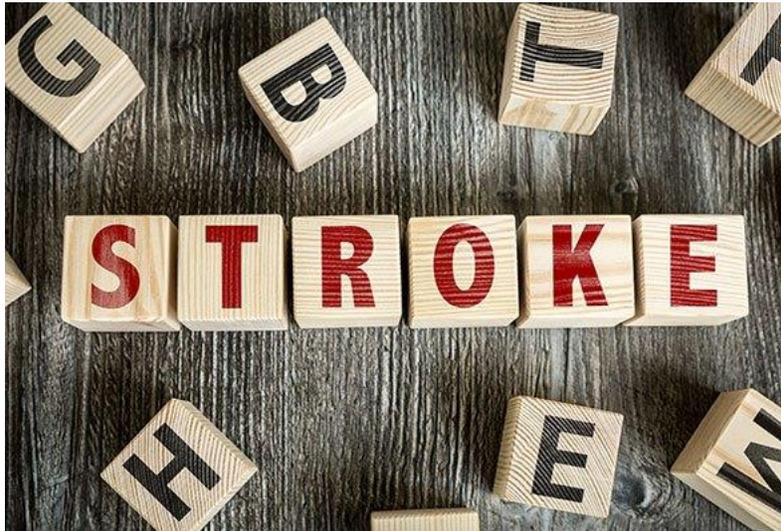
- **Blood Pressure** – Know your blood pressure. If it's high, lower it, and have it checked often.
- **Cholesterol** – Know it, and, if it's high, lower it!
- **Diabetes** – If you have diabetes, keep it under control.
- **Your Doctor** – See your doctor regularly.

Sometimes the first thing people need to do is [find a doctor](#) who can help determine if they have stroke risk factors. Then the doctor can help people manage any chronic health problems that may contribute to an increased stroke risk.

Two million brain cells are lost within the first minute after a stroke starts.

Time equals brain. The faster a person who is having a stroke receives treatment, the better the chances of a complete recovery and life without disability. Therefore, it's important to recognize the signs of stroke, and respond appropriately by calling 9-1-1.

For more information about stroke, visit www.wakemed.org/neurosciences-stroke.



May Is National Stroke Awareness Month

National Stroke Awareness Month is an annual opportunity to get the word out about stroke. Each May, the [American Heart Association/American Stroke Association](#) recognizes National Stroke Awareness Month by educating people about the signs, symptoms and ways that we can prevent stroke. And each May, WakeMed joins in.

WakeMed is a leading provider of emergency care to stop strokes in their tracks and [inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation](#) to help people who have suffered strokes [get back to enjoying life](#).

WakeMed: Award Winning Care for Stroke

WakeMed Raleigh Campus and WakeMed Cary Hospital are [Joint Commission-Certified Primary Stroke Centers](#) – a recognition we've held since 2006 and 2008, respectively. We have received multiple awards for quality care from the American Heart Association (AHA) and American Stroke Association (ASA)'s [Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke](#) program.