



for your company
for your employees
for your future
February 1, 2010

WELLNESS WEEKLY

STROKE HAPPENS.

Know the signs. Act fast.

A stroke happens when a part of the brain dies from lack of blood, usually because one of the arteries that supply oxygen-carrying blood to the brain has been damaged. There are two ways this can happen:

1. Clogged vessel or ischemic stroke: Caused by blockage of a blood vessel in the brain, usually by a blood clot or by fatty deposits on the vessel wall. 85% of strokes are ischemic.
2. Burst vessel or hemorrhagic stroke: Caused by a ruptured blood vessel, preventing normal flow and allowing blood to leak into brain tissue, destroying it. This occurs in 15% of strokes.



Stroke is a common and often misunderstood condition and its early symptoms are often ignored. Some brain cells deprived of oxygen die within minutes. Others may take a few hours to die depending on the nature of the blockage or hemorrhage. The loss of physical and mental functions is often permanent and can include motor-function disability. The most effective treatment for stroke can be administered if it is within three hours of the onset of stroke. Although strokes can occur at any age, most stroke patients (two-thirds) are over the age of 65.

A TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK OR TIA is often described as a mini-stroke. Unlike a stroke however, the symptoms can disappear within a few minutes. By definition, a TIA resolves within 24 hours. A TIA happens when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked or reduced, often by a blood clot. After a short time, blood flows again and the symptoms go away. With a stroke, the blood flow stays blocked, and the brain has permanent damage.

A TIA is a warning: It means you are likely to have a stroke in the future. If you think you are having a TIA, call 911. Early treatment can help prevent a stroke. If you think you have had a TIA but your symptoms have gone away, you still need to call your doctor right away.

WARNING SIGNS

- WALK** (Is your balance off?)
- TALK** (Is your speech slurred or face droopy?)
- REACH** (Is your vision all or partly lost?)
- FEEL** (Is your headache severe?)

RISK FACTORS

- High blood pressure & cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Family history of stroke
- Obesity
- Previous Strokes

To slash your stroke risk by 80 percent, keep these five simple health habits in mind: Walk every day, maintain a healthy weight, avoid cigarette smoke, enjoy alcohol only in moderation, and eat as nutritiously as you can.