

# Stroke

**A** stroke happens when a blood vessel to the brain bursts or is clogged by a blood clot. This prevents the brain from getting the blood and oxygen it needs. Without oxygen, the nerves in the brain die within minutes. The more time that passes without treatment, the greater the damage to the brain. **Treatment within three hours of a stroke can often reduce long-term effects.**

## A stroke can affect the ability to:

- Move and coordinate movement
- Feel temperature, pain, and movement
- See or interpret what you see
- Think, remember, understand, plan, reason, or problem-solve

## Warning Signs of a Stroke

### You may have one or more of the following:

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

These signs may last only a few minutes. **Don't ignore them!** If you or someone you are with shows any of these signs, **call 9-1-1 to get medical help right away.**

## Reduce Your Risk of a Stroke

**You can reduce your chance of having a stroke by having a healthy lifestyle.**

- **Be smoke free.** Get help to quit smoking.
- **Be physically active.** Regular physical activity helps lower blood pressure and helps you maintain a healthy weight. Try going for a brisk, 30-minute walk on most days of the week.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat foods with less saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grain breads and cereals, and low-fat dairy foods and meats.

- **Limit alcohol intake.** If you drink alcohol, drink no more than one or two drinks per day.
- **Get regular checkups.** High blood pressure can lead to a stroke. Your doctor can check your blood pressure to make sure it is at a healthy level.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** High blood pressure is more common among people who are overweight. A healthy weight means lower blood pressure for most people.



*Making these lifestyle changes can help reduce your chance of having a stroke.*