

# About stroke

## Fact sheet

### What is a stroke?

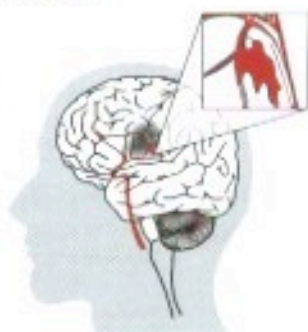
**Stroke attacks the brain**, which controls the human body. The brain needs oxygen and nutrients carried in blood. A stroke happens when the brain does not get the blood it needs.

Brain cells die quickly when they do not get enough blood. Up to 1.9 million brain cells may die every minute.

### There are two types of stroke:



**Ischaemic stroke**  
(spoken "is key rick")  
Blood clot or plaque blocks artery



**Haemorrhagic stroke**  
(spoken "hemm-orr-ragic")  
Artery breaks or bursts

**Every stroke is different.** How a stroke affects someone depends on where it happens in the brain, and on how big the stroke is.

Stroke can affect a person's body, their emotions, and the way they think. It can cause muscle weakness, and problems with speaking, memory, hearing or vision.

**Stroke is always a medical emergency.**  
**Call triple zero (000) at the first sign of stroke.**

### How is a TIA different?

TIA is a transient ischaemic attack. A TIA happens when the blood supply to your brain is blocked for a short time. A TIA has the same signs as a stroke, but the signs go away on their own. Often the signs only last for a few minutes.

**Never ignore a TIA. Call triple zero (000) right away, even if the signs go away and you feel better.**

Recognise **STROKE** Think **F.A.S.T.**



**F** Has their **FACE** drooped?  
**A** Can they lift both **ARMS**?  
**S** Is their **SPEECH** slurred and do they understand you?  
**T** Call **000**. **TIME** is critical.

If you see any of these symptoms  
**Act FAST call 000**

Stroke  
FOUNDATION

### Signs of a stroke

**Face** – check their face. Has their mouth drooped?

**Arms** – can they lift both arms?

**Speech** – is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?

**Time** – time is critical. Call triple zero (000) now if you see **any** of these signs.

Share the F.A.S.T. message with your family and friends.



# 5 tips to a healthy life



## Make time for a health check

See your doctor for a regular check-up to find out if you have risk factors for stroke. This is even more important if you are over 45.

- › **Ask for a blood pressure check.** High blood pressure is the top risk factor for stroke. You cannot tell if you have high blood pressure without a test from your doctor or pharmacist. The test is quick and does not hurt.
- › **Check cholesterol.** Ask your doctor to test if you have high cholesterol in your blood. You can lower your cholesterol by not eating saturated fats, such as animal fats.
- › **Talk to your doctor about diabetes.** You can control type 2 diabetes with healthy eating, regular exercise and checking your blood sugar levels.
- › **Check for irregular pulse.** Atrial fibrillation is when your heart does not beat in a smooth pattern. Talk to your doctor about how to treat it.



## Eat well

A bad diet can lead to high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Healthy eating is important to lower your risk of stroke.

- › **Balance your diet.** Eat fruit, grains, vegetables, lean meats, poultry, fish, reduced fat milk and yoghurt. Eat less animal fats.
- › **Cut out salt.** Read the label on packaged food to find out how much sodium is in it.
- › **Swap sugar.** Eat nuts or fresh fruit instead of sweet snacks. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- › **Go fresh.** Buy fresh food from markets. Eat less processed food.



## Stay active

Being inactive, being overweight or having too much body fat can lead to high blood pressure and cholesterol. Exercise regularly.

- › **Walk.** Go for a walk or a bushwalk instead of driving in a car. Try to walk faster than you usually walk.
- › **Sign up for a weekly class.** For example, you can take a class in dancing, aerobics or crossfit.
- › **Get moving outdoors.** Enjoy the great outdoors doing something like riding a bike, swimming, or working in the garden.



## Drink alcohol only in moderation

The risk for stroke is higher if you drink more alcohol.

- › **Think before you drink.** Regularly drinking a lot of alcohol can cause high blood pressure and increases your risk of stroke.
- › **Stop at two.** Drink no more than two standard alcoholic drinks on any day.



## Be smoke free

Smoking increases blood pressure and reduces oxygen going to the brain. Smoking doubles your risk of stroke.

- › **Quitting is good for you straight away.** Your body starts to repair in the first 24 hours after you quit. The risk of heart attack and stroke starts to drop right away.
- › **Within a month of quitting,** your blood pressure can go back to normal.

## About the Stroke Foundation

The Stroke Foundation is a national charity that partners with the community to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery.

- › StrokeLine 1800 STROKE (1800 787 653)
- › [strokefoundation.org.au](http://strokefoundation.org.au)
- › [/strokefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/strokefoundation)
- › [@strokefdn](https://twitter.com/strokefdn)
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