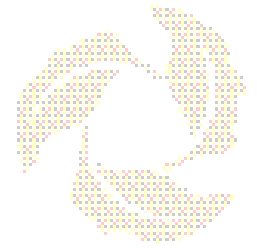


Strokes: what to watch for and how to prevent them



Toronto Rehab

For rehab patients and their families

If you had a stroke before, you have a greater chance of having one again. Read this to find out what to watch for and what you can do to prevent a stroke.

What are the main warning signs of stroke?



Face – Is it drooping?



Arms – Can you raise both?



Speech – Is it slurred or jumbled?



Time – Call 9-1-1 right away

What happens with a stroke?

A stroke is an injury to a part of the brain when the blood flow is interrupted. There are two main types of stroke:

- strokes caused by **blood clots** (an ischemic stroke)
- **bleeding strokes** (a hemorrhagic stroke)

The effects of a stroke can vary. It depends on where the brain was injured and how much damage was done.

What are the risk factors?

Risk factors are things that increase your risk of having a stroke. Some things you can control, while others you cannot.

You are more likely to have a stroke if you:

- have high blood pressure (hypertension)
- have high blood cholesterol
- have diabetes
- smoke
- are overweight
- drink a lot of alcohol
- don't exercise enough
- have heart disease or atrial fibrillation
- are under stress

Some factors you cannot control. You are more at risk if you:

- are a man
- have a family history of stroke
- are from Aboriginal, African, or South Asian descent
- had a stroke before (including Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or “mini-stroke”)

How can I avoid getting a stroke?

Know your risk factors and take care of your health.

- Monitor blood pressure regularly.
- Monitor blood sugar levels, and keep it in a healthy range.
- Check cholesterol, including “bad” (LDL, TG’s) and “good” (HDL).
- Take your medicine as your doctor prescribes.
- Avoid alcohol. It can slow your recovery and may mix badly with medications.

Live a healthy lifestyle.

- Quit smoking.
- Exercise 3 to 5 times per week for 30 to 60 minutes. This can include walking, swimming or other physical activity.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Manage stress. Do 20 minutes of relaxation per day.
- Reduce alcohol or cut out alcohol. Talk to your doctor about how many drinks are OK, if any.

For more information contact the **Heart and Stroke Foundation** at www.heartandstroke.ca or 1-888-473-4636