



Introduction to Stroke

Did You Know?

- ✓ Stroke is the **3rd leading cause** of death and a leading cause of disability in Canada
- ✓ **60% of persons** with stroke will have a long-term impairment that can affect participation in everyday activities
- ✓ **1 in 5 persons** living in Long Term Care have had a stroke
- ✓ Stroke recovery can be a lifelong process



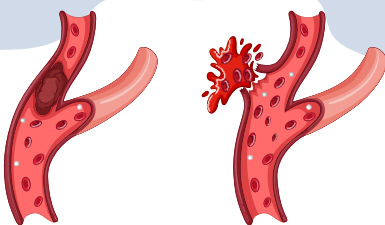
How does the brain work?

The brain is divided into 2 halves called hemispheres. In general, the left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body. The location of the stroke determines what functions are affected. For example, a stroke on the left side of the brain can cause the right arm or leg to be weak.

What is a Stroke?

A stroke is sudden and occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted causing brain cells to die.

Two common types of stroke:



ISCHEMIC

HEMORRHAGIC

Ischemic - Blood supply in the brain is blocked by blood clots and/or buildup of plaque in the blood vessels. More than **75%** of strokes are ischemic.


Hemorrhagic - A blood vessel in the brain leaks or ruptures. Less than **25%** of strokes are hemorrhagic.





What is a TIA?

- ✓ Sometimes called a “mini-stroke”, a **Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)** is caused by a short-term lack of blood flow to the brain. This may cause stroke symptoms that last minutes to hours.
- ✓ TIA is an important warning sign that a more serious stroke may occur soon. TIAs must be treated as a **MEDICAL EMERGENCY** and 911 should be called immediately.

Signs and Symptoms of Stroke

- ✓ Learn to recognize the signs of stroke and act quickly!
- ✓ While FAST is a good way to recognize and remember these signs and symptoms, the sudden onset of other symptoms may also be indicative of stroke:
 - loss of balance/coordination
 - changes in vision
 - sudden severe headache
 - numbness in one half of the body

**SPOT A STROKE - ACT F.A.S.T**

-  **F** **FACE** drooping
-  **A** **ARM** weakness
-  **S** **SPEECH** difficulty
-  **T** **TIME** is critical - call 911

Common effects of Stroke

Every stroke is different. Depending on what part of the brain is damaged by the stroke, the person may experience physical, cognitive, perceptual and emotional changes which may include:

- One-sided weakness/paralysis
- Loss of balance/coordination
- Bladder/bowel problems
- Swallowing problems
- Fatigue
- Trouble communicating
- Loss of sensation (how you perceive touch, temperature, etc.)
- Difficulty paying attention to one side of the body or environment
- Vision changes
- Changes in thinking and/ or memory
- Changes in personality or behaviour
- Changes in emotions or mood (e.g unexpected emotional responses, depression, anxiety, etc)

Understanding the effects of stroke will help you to provide better care and support to the person with stroke and their family. Please refer to the other SMART TIPS for Stroke Care topics for more information.



Recovery after a stroke is possible.

It begins immediately after the stroke and continues throughout one's life.