

# Stroke: Types, Signs, and Prevention



Recognize **the signs**.  
Immediately call 911.  
You might **save** a life.

Other resources to learn more about strokes:

[www.accidentecerebrovascular.com](http://www.accidentecerebrovascular.com)

[www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/stroke/symptoms-causes/syc-20350113>

## Seriousness and Prevalence of Stroke

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. It is also one of the leading causes of disability among adults. More than 600,000 cases of stroke occur every year in this country. Fortunately, treatments that lower the damage from stroke exist **only if someone recognizes stroke signs and calls 9-1-1 to get that person to the hospital as soon as possible**. If they arrive at the hospital within 2 to 3 hours of the onset of stroke symptoms, it is possible to prevent disability and lasting brain damage. This pamphlet will describe what the types of stroke, signs of stroke, and prevention measures are. Reading all of the information carefully might just save a life or someone you know from lasting disability.

# Stroke types and disability

## What are the different types of stroke?

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is affected. As a result, one region of the brain stops receiving oxygen and begins to die.

There are three main types of stroke:

1. **Ischemic Stroke:** A blood vessel that supplies the brain with blood clots and blood cannot flow through to the brain (typically due to atherosclerosis, or the buildup of deposits of fat along blood vessel walls).
2. **Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA):** A blood clot that resolves itself. It is a major risk factor for a real stroke and you should still go to the hospital if you have one.
3. **Hemorrhagic Stroke:** A blood vessel that supplies the brain with blood ruptures (typically caused by an aneurysm)

## What types of disability remain after a stroke?

Even though a stroke happens in the brain, it can affect the entire body. Given that different areas of the brain control different parts of the body, the area affected by the stroke can no longer control that part of the body or carry out its intended function. Disability can include problems with reasoning, vision, speech, movement, incontinence, and even one-sided or full paralysis.

# Stroke signs

All stroke signs are sudden and occur without warning. Remember the acronym **F.A.S.T.!**

## Facial drooping

Ask the person to smile. If it is irregular or one side of their face is drooping, it is a stroke sign.

## Arm weakness

Pídale a la persona que se levante ambos brazos. Si uno de los brazos se desvía hacia abajo, es una señal de un ACV.

## Speech Difficulties

Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase like “the sky is blue.” If they don’t repeat it correctly, it is a stroke sign.

## Time to call 911

If someone shows any of these signs, call 911 right away (even if the signs disappear).

**Other signs include:** sudden confusion, dizziness, loss of balance, intense headache without a known cause.

## If the person faints after I call 911, what can I do before the paramedics arrive?

Take their pulse. If there is not one, begin to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Press **strongly** in the center of the chest with two hands to the rhythm of the song “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees.

# Prevention Measures

## How can one prevent a stroke?

There are various risk factors that increase the probability of having a stroke:

- Diabetes
- High “bad” cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Heart problems
- Smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Advanced age (65+)
- Family history

If you want to lower the risk of having a stroke, you can change your lifestyle: stop smoking, control high cholesterol and blood pressure with a balanced diet and exercise daily.

One has to recognize that there are many barriers to healthcare: some people prefer to try alternative medicine before going to the hospital to pay a lot of money. There are also language barriers (a lot of health resources only satisfy the needs of English speaking populations), barriers to access to healthcare and a lack of confidence in the healthcare system overall. Latinos deal with daily barriers, including, for some, access to healthcare. However, the best course of prevention is not only to improve healthcare access and confidence in doctors, but also to improve education about stroke signs and how to avoid risk factors that lead to stroke.