

> What is stroke?

A stroke is a life-threatening medical condition that occurs when blood supply to part of the brain is restricted or stopped.

During a stroke, brain cells in the affected part of your brain become damaged because they are not getting the oxygen they need from your blood. This can lead to brain injury, disability and possibly death.

> What are the causes?

There are two main causes of strokes:

- **Ischaemic** - Accounts for 85% of all cases. Blood supply to the brain is stopped because of a blood clot
- **Haemorrhagic** - Occurs when a weakened blood vessel supplying the brain bursts

There are certain conditions that can increase the risk of having a stroke. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and atrial fibrillation.

> What are the signs of stroke?

To spot the early warning signs of stroke in yourself or another individual, use the **FAST** test:

Face – The face may fall on one side and the person may not be able to smile

Arms - unable to raise both arms and keep them in position

Speech problems - not able to speak clearly

Time to call 999 for ambulance if you see any of the three signs

Others signs of stroke include

- Sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body including legs, hands and feet
- Sudden blurred vision or loss of sight in one or both eyes
- Sudden memory loss of confusion, dizziness
- Sudden falls and severe headaches

Do you know that..

- Having too much fat, salt and sugar in your diet can increase the risk of stroke
- Healthy eating lowers the chances of having a stroke
- Eating five portions of fruit and vegetable a day can reduce your risk of stroke by 30%
- Fruit and vegetables contain antioxidants such as Vitamins A, C and E which prevent damage to your arteries, which can lead to stroke

Dietary tips to reduce risk of stroke

- Cut down on saturated fats, cheese, fatty meat, processed meat and takeaways
- Eat at least five portions of fruit & veg
- Starchy foods should make up a third of your daily diet
- Limit your salt intake to 6g/day
- Aim to eat some protein every day found in oily fish, peas, beans and nuts

> Other resources

www.stroke.org.uk Helpline 0303 3033 100	National charity offering information for healthcare professionals and the public.
mystrokeguide.com	Advice, information and videos from the Stroke Association explaining what you need to know after a stroke. Includes an online forum.
I care Day Centre Old School House, High Street, Green Street Green, Orpington BR6 6BJ Tel: 01689 862 883	A rehabilitation centre for people who have experienced a stroke. People can refer themselves by calling the telephone number. There is a daily charge.
NHS Conditions Stroke	NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of Stroke. It also includes information about recovery from stroke and about the rehabilitation services you might be entitled to.
Different Strokes Information line 0345 130 7172	A national charity providing support for younger people affected by stroke.