

What is a 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 the brain become damaged because they are not getting the oxygen they need. This can lead to brain injury, disability, and possibly death.

What are the symptoms?

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 an ambulance if you see any of these three signs.

Other 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 or confusion, dizziness.
- Sudden falls and severe headaches.

SELF CARE TIPS

STOP SMOKING

Smoking can increase your risk of stroke as it causes inflammation and damage to the blood vessels. This can restrict blood flow, due to a build up of plaque, and increase blood pressure.

FIND WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS AND REST

Stress can contribute to disrupted sleep and high blood pressure, both of which can increase the risk of strokes.

To register with Bromley Well:
Freephone 0808 278 7898
Or register online:
www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer

Contact Lifestyle Support direct
07985 431484 / 07985 444210
or email
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What are the causes?

There are two main causes of stroke:

- Ischaemic stroke – accounts for 85% of all cases. Blood supply to the brain is stopped because of a blood clot.
- Haemorrhagic stroke – occurs when a weakened blood vessel supplying the brain bursts.

There are certain factors that can increase the risk of having a stroke. These include:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Atrial fibrillation
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Age
- Family history
- A previous stroke



SELF CARE TIPS

REDUCE SATURATED FATS AND PROCESSED FOODS

Having too much fat, salt, and sugar in your diet can increase the risk of stroke. So cutting down on saturated fats, cheese, fatty meat, processed meat, and takeaways can help reduce your risk.

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What about treatment?

Treatments depend on the type of stroke:

- Ischaemic stroke – treatment focuses on breaking down the clot, through medications such as thrombolysis (alteplase) or anticoagulants or antiplatelets or a procedure to remove the clot (thrombectomy). Changes may also be made to other medications, like statins and blood pressure medication, to control risk factors.
- Haemorrhagic stroke – it may require medication to reduce blood pressure or sometimes surgery to stop bleeding (craniotomy).

What is a myth about stroke?

Strokes can't be prevented

Not true. Some people think that strokes are always random events that cannot be predicted or prevented. Although some cannot be avoided, there are some risk factors that we have more control over to prevent strokes. These include the risks stated above such as: high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, physical inactivity, obesity, excessive alcohol consumption, and atrial fibrillation.

SELF CARE TIPS

EAT PLENTY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Eating a healthy balanced diet decreases your risk of having a stroke.

Specifically, eating five portions of fruit and vegetable a day can reduce your risk of stroke by 30%. This is because fruit and vegetables contain antioxidants such as vitamins A, C and E which prevent damage to your arteries, which can lead to stroke.

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HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated December 2025

FURTHER RESOURCES

Stroke Association

Helpline 0303 3033 100

www.stroke.org.uk/stroke/support

National charity offering information for healthcare professionals and the public.

My Stroke Guide

www.stroke.org.uk/

Advice, information and videos from the Stroke Association explaining what you need to know after a stroke. Includes an online forum.

Different Strokes

Information Line: 0345 130 7172

www.differentstrokes.co.uk/

A national charity providing support for younger people affected by stroke.

NHS Conditions Stroke

www.nhs.uk/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.

References: NHS conditions www.nhs.uk/conditions/rheumatoid-arthritis/ NICE www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng100

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