

## Stroke 101: Fast Facts on Stroke

- Stroke is a brain attack, cutting off vital blood flow and oxygen to the brain.
- In the United States, stroke is a leading cause of death, killing nearly 130,000 people each year, and can cause serious, long-term adult disability.
- There are an estimated 7 million stroke survivors in the U.S. over age 20.
- Approximately 800,000 strokes will occur this year, one occurring every 40 seconds, and taking a life approximately every four minutes.
- Stroke can happen to anyone at any time, regardless of race, sex, or age.
- Approximately 55,000 more women than men have a stroke each year.
- African Americans have almost twice the risk of first-ever stroke compared to Caucasians.
- Two million brain cells die every minute during stroke, increasing risk of permanent brain damage, disability or death. Recognizing symptoms and acting FAST to get medical attention can save a life and limit disabilities.
- The prevalence of transient ischemic attacks (TIA – “mini strokes”) increases with age. Up to 40 percent of all people who suffer a TIA will go on to have a stroke.
- In 2012 the total stroke related cost in the U.S. was estimated to be \$105 billion, and is projected to hit \$240 billion by 2030.

### What types of stroke are there?

- Ischemic stroke occurs when arteries are blocked by either blood clots or the build-up of plaque and other fatty deposits. About 87 percent of all strokes are ischemic.
- Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain breaks and leaks blood into the brain. Hemorrhagic strokes account for 13 percent of strokes, but are responsible for more than 30 percent of all stroke deaths.

## What is FAST?

Few Americans know the signs of stroke. Learning them – and acting FAST when they occur – could save your life or the life of a loved one. Remember that stroke strikes FAST and you should act fast, too. Call 9-1-1 if any of the following symptoms occur:

Use the **FAST** test to recognize and respond to the signs of stroke.

### Use FAST to remember warning signs of stroke:



**FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?



**ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?



**SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?



**TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call **9-1-1 immediately**.

## What are the medical risk factors?

Previous stroke, previous episode of TIA (or mini stroke), high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, atrial fibrillation and carotid artery disease are medical risk factors.

These factors can be controlled and managed even if you have already had issues with any of them in the past. Talk with your doctor about what will work best for you.

## What are the lifestyle risk factors?

Smoking, being overweight, and drinking too much alcohol are all lifestyle factors. You can control these factors by quitting smoking, exercising regularly, watching what and how much you eat, and limiting alcohol consumption.

For more information about ways to reduce your risk of stroke, visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)

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