

Preventing Another Stroke

Having one stroke increases the risk of another, but there is a lot you can do to lower that risk.

- **Take medications as prescribed:** These may include blood thinners, blood pressure, cholesterol or diabetes medicines
- **Control blood pressure:** High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke (recommended blood pressure goal is 130/80 or less)
- **Manage diabetes:** Keep blood sugar in a healthy range
- **Lower cholesterol:** Helps prevent artery blockages
- **Treat heart conditions:** Atrial fibrillation and other heart problems can cause clots
- **Stop smoking or vaping:** Improves blood vessel health
- **Be physically active:** Regular movement supports heart and brain health (recommended activity is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week)
- **Eat a heart-healthy diet:** Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, fiber and less salt
- **Limit alcohol:** Too much can raise blood pressure
- **Keep follow-up appointments:** Regular checkups help catch problems early

Small daily habits, along with medical care, can greatly reduce the risk of another stroke.

Support for You and Your Caregivers

Stroke affects the whole family. Support can help both survivors and caregivers.

Stroke Support Group at Holy Cross Germantown Hospital
Phone: 301-557-5929
Register at: HolyCrossHealth.org/Support

Holy Cross Health Community Health Classes
Phone: 301-754-8800
Register at: HolyCrossHealth.org/Classes-Events

Holy Cross Caregiver Resource Center
Phone: 301-754-7152
Website: HolyCrossHealth.org/CRC

Holy Cross Home Care and Hospice
Phone: 301-557-HOME (4663)
Website: HolyCrossHealth.org/Home Care and Hospice

Holy Cross Private Home Services
Phone: 301-754-7780
Website: HolyCrossHealth.org/Private-Home-Services

Holy Cross Health Centers
Aspen Hill: 301-557-1950
Gaithersburg: 301-557-1832
Germantown: 301-557-2140
Silver Spring: 301-557-1870
Website: HolyCrossHealth.org/HCHC

Holy Cross Health Partners Primary Care Locations
Asbury: 301-557-2110
Elizabeth Square: 301-557-1180
Kensington: 301-949-4242
Progressive: 301-557-1540
Rockville: 301-557-1210
Calverton: 301-557-1240
Website: HolyCrossHealth.org/HCHP

Montgomery County Stroke Association
Phone: 301-681-6272
Email: MCStrokeInfo@gmail.com
Website: MCStroke.org

The Stroke Comeback Center
Website: strokecomebackcenter.org

A Stroke of Grace
Website: astrokeofgrace.org

Trusted information and support are also available from the American Heart Association at heart.org and the American Stroke Association at stroke.org.

SCAN THE CODE or VISIT HolyCrossHealth.org/stroke for more information about Holy Cross Health's award-winning stroke program.

To contact the neuroscience team, call Sharon Harriston, RN, MS, CCNS, ACNP-BC, at **301-754-7529** or email **harrish@holycrosshealth.org** for the Silver Spring location, or call Luciana Castro, BSN, RN, PCCN, Stroke Program Coordinator, at **301-557-5929** or email **luciana.castro@holycrosshealth.org** for the Germantown location.



Stroke Care Guide

From Emergency to Recovery

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A Member of Trinity Health

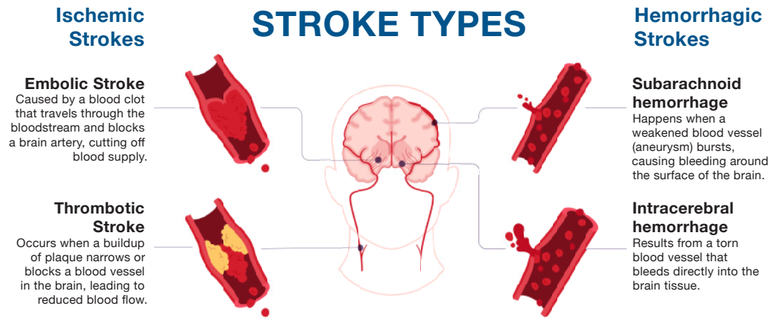
What Is a Stroke

A stroke happens when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked or a blood vessel breaks. Brain cells begin to die within minutes because they do not get oxygen. Fast treatment can reduce brain damage and save lives.

TYPES OF STROKE

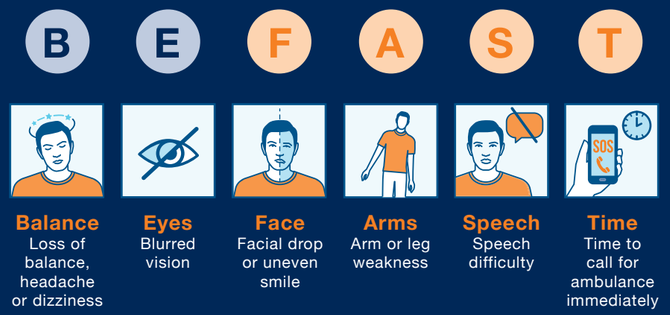
- **Ischemic stroke:** caused by a blood clot blocking flow to the brain
- **Hemorrhagic stroke:** caused by bleeding in the brain

A TIA (transient ischemic attack), sometimes called a mini stroke, causes temporary symptoms. It is a serious warning sign of a major future stroke and needs emergency care.



How to Recognize a Stroke

Stroke symptoms usually start suddenly. Call 911 right away if you notice any of these symptoms:





What Increases Your Risk

Anyone can have a stroke, but risk is higher if you have certain health conditions or personal factors.

Risk factors YOU CAN control

- **High blood pressure:** Damages blood vessels
- **Smoking or vaping:** Makes blood more likely to clot
- **Diabetes:** High sugar harms blood vessels
- **High cholesterol:** Can block arteries
- **Heart disease or atrial fibrillation:** Can cause clots to travel to the brain
- **Physical inactivity:** Raises risk of other stroke conditions
- **Overweight or obesity:** Strains heart and blood vessels
- **Excess alcohol use:** Can raise blood pressure

Risk factors YOU CANNOT control

- **Age:** Risk rises after 55
- **Family history:** Stroke in close relatives increases your risk
- **Previous stroke or TIA:** Greatly raises chance of another stroke
- **Sex:** Women have a slightly higher lifetime risk
- **Race and ethnicity:** Higher risk in Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino adults

Emergency Treatment: Every Minute Matters

Stroke is a medical emergency. Fast treatment can save brain cells and reduce disability. During a stroke, nearly 2 million brain cells die each minute.

At the hospital, physicians will quickly test to determine the type of stroke. Some people may receive medicine to dissolve a clot or a procedure to remove it. These treatments only work if given quickly, which is why calling 911 right away is critical.

Your Recovery Journey

Stroke recovery is different for everyone. Some people recover quickly, while others need longer rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation helps you regain strength and independence. Your care team may include:

- Physical therapy for walking and balance
- Occupational therapy for daily activities like dressing and bathing
- Speech therapy for speaking or swallowing
- Emotional and mental health support Rehab may happen in the hospital, a rehab center, outpatient therapy or at home.

Possible Effects After a Stroke

A stroke can affect the body and brain in different ways depending on the area injured. Some common effects include:

- Weakness or paralysis on one side
- Difficulty walking
- Trouble speaking or understanding
- Vision problems
- Memory or thinking changes
- Trouble swallowing
- Changes in mood or energy
- Depression

Many of these can improve with therapy and time.