

## Stroke – there's treatment if you act FAST.



### Your Health

#### Strokes©

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Words are explained alongside the text

Stressed syllables are underlined and in bold

Pronunciation tips\*

Welcome to Your Health, brought to you by The Medical Frontier, Medical news, simplified, on twitter @medfrontier.

Two of the most common cardiovascular problems

often leading to long term disability or death, are heart attacks and strokes. Today's piece will focus on strokes, which according to the World Heart Federation, are responsible for 15 million cardiovascular cases a year. What are the different types of strokes? How can you recognize them? What should you do? And what can you do to reduce your risk of having one?

Technically there are three types of stroke, two are pretty similar to each other and the third is very different. Let's begin by exploring the first type of stroke, the most common one, affecting 87% of all stroke cases according to the American Stroke Association. This is called an Ischemic stroke. Ischemic means that the blood vessels to a particular organ, like the heart or brain, have been blocked by a blood clot, and therefore the blood has stopped flowing to where it needs to go. We now know that an Ischemic stroke means that a blood clot has formed in the brain and blood can't reach certain critical areas for brain function. Your brain is the most energy-demanding organ in the whole body and needs plenty of oxygen and glucose from the blood to work properly. If you block arteries that deliver this, that part of the brain starts to die and you end up with a stroke.

The second type of stroke is called a TIA. This stands for Trans-Ischemic Attack. As you may have guessed, Ischemic being part of the name, it also involves a clot in the brain. The reason a TIA is different to an Ischemic

to lead to (vb.) to result in

disability (n.) situation of being unable to function normally

to focus on (vb.) to concentrate on, deal with, look at

according to (exp.) in the opinion of (using the information they have)

pretty similar to (exp.) almost the same as

to affect (vb.) to concern

blood vessels (n.n.) narrow tube through which blood flows in the body

a blood clot (n.n.) a sticky lump from blood which dries out

critical areas (exp.) essential regions

energy-demanding (adj.) requiring a lot of energy

plenty of (exp.) a large quantity of

properly (adv.) correctly

to end up with (phrasal vb.) to finish with

to guess (vb.) to try to find an answer without having definite knowledge of sth.

stroke is that the clot that blocks the blood vessel doesn't stay there for long and **eventually disintegrates**. Sometimes a TIA is called a 'mini-stroke'. Despite the fact that this is less serious than an Ischemic stroke, don't wait to see if the symptoms go away – call the **emergency services immediately** as you won't be able **to tell the difference** between the two.

The third type of stroke is called a hemorrhagic stroke. This is a much more rare type of stroke than the other two but has similar symptoms. During this type of stroke, **instead** of a clot forming, the actual blood vessel in the brain can **burst**. This causes a bleed in the surrounding brain **tissue**. **Whilst** a doctor will typically treat an Ischemic stroke with clot **busting** drugs to remove the clot, they have to treat a hemorrhagic stroke differently. They usually do this by **lowering** blood **pressure** (if it's high) and **performing surgery** to stop the bleed.

So what does it **look like** when someone is having a stroke? What are the signs to **look for**?

The best way to remember what to look for is the four-letter **word** FAST. This **stands for**:

F – Face: check the persons face, can they smile properly or is it **droopy** on one side?

A – Arms: can they **lift** both arms in front of them? Or does one of them appear **lower** than the other?

S – Speech: Does the person **have trouble speaking**?

T – Time, **Record** the time of the stroke and call an ambulance as soon as you can.

T can also stand for **Tongue**: if they **stick their tongue out** and it comes out at an angle, this can also be a sign of a stroke.

**Cutting down on** smoking, drinking, unhealthy eating and an increase in physical **activity**, can reduce your stroke risk. Taking a low dose of **aspirin** daily may reduce your risk of an Ischemic stroke but there have been arguments for and against this in the medical **community**, **as** aspirin **thins** the blood and could actually make a hemorrhagic stroke much **worse**.

This week's advice: when **dealing with** a stroke, remember: time lost is brain lost.

**emergency services** (n.n.) public organizations which deal with emergencies (the fire brigade, the police and the ambulance service)

**to tell the difference** (exp.) to differentiate

**to burst** (irreg. vb. burst, burst) to suddenly break open

**whilst** (conj.) although

**to bust** (vb.) to break

**to lower** (vb.) to reduce

**to perform surgery** (exp.) to give the patient an operation

**to look like** (phrasal vb.) to resemble

**to look for** (phrasal vb.) to search for

**to stand for** (phrasal vb.) to represent, to signify

**droopy** (adj.) hanging down with no strength

**to lift** (vb.) to raise, to move to a higher position

**lower** (comparative adj. from "low) not as high as

**to have trouble doing sth.** (exp.) to have difficulty doing sth.

**to record** (vb.) to make a note of, to write down

**tongue** (n.) soft movable part in your mouth used when eating and speaking

**to stick out one's tongue** (exp.) to extend from your mouth

**to cut down on** (phrasal vb.) to reduce

**as** (conj.) because

**to thin** (vb.) to make thinner or more liquid

**to deal with** (phrasal vb.) to treat

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### \*Tips

The stress on 4-syllable words is either on the 2nd or the 3rd syllable.

Examples of 2<sup>nd</sup> syllable word stress: responsible, American, particular, eventually, disintegrates, emergency, immediately, activity, community

An example of 3<sup>rd</sup> syllable word stress: hemorrhagic

The following words can be difficult to pronounce. A guide to their pronunciation is given in brackets to help you:

heart (rhymes with "part"), piece (same pronunciation as "peace"), diff(e)rent (2 syllables)  
blood (rhymes with "mud"), guessed (same pronunciation as "guest"),  
instead (rhymes with "head"), tissue and pressure (the double "ss" is pronounced like "sh")  
word and worse (both have the same vowel sound like 'ir' in first),  
tongue (rhymes with "hung"), asp(i)rin ( 2 syllables)

The words below are stressed on the 1<sup>st</sup> syllable. The end syllable is unstressed and sounds like the "un" in "uncle":

often, million, common, certain, organ, oxygen