

Stroke: Know the Signs and Lower Your Risk

Medical-Surgical · Neurology

A stroke happens when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked or a blood vessel in the brain bursts. Fast treatment protects the brain, and daily habits help prevent another stroke.

Remember BE FAST

- **B, Balance:** sudden loss of balance.
- **E, Eyes:** sudden vision loss or change.
- **F, Face:** one side droops.
- **A, Arms:** one arm or leg becomes weak or numb.
- **S, Speech:** speech is slurred or strange.
- **T, Time:** call 911 right away.

Act at once

- **Call 911 even if the signs go away.** This is a warning stroke.
- Write down the time the signs began.
- Do not drive yourself. Wait for the ambulance.
- Do not take aspirin, food, or drinks while you wait.

Take your medicines

- Take your blood thinner or anti-clot pill every day. Do not stop it on your own.
- Take your blood pressure and cholesterol medicines daily.
- Your blood pressure goal: _____.

Build healthy habits

- Stop smoking.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day for men or 1 for women.
- Keep your blood sugar in your target range.

- Move most days, as your care team advises.
- Eat vegetables, fruit, whole grains, fish, and less salt.

Stay safe at home

- Remove loose rugs. Use grab bars, good shoes, and your cane or walker.
- If you were taught a swallowing plan, sit up straight and take small bites.

Call your provider today if you have

- Coughing or choking when you eat or drink
- Blood pressure above your goal again and again
- New bruising or small bleeds
- A fall, even without injury
- Feeling sad or hopeless most days

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Any sudden BE FAST sign, even if it goes away
- A sudden, very bad headache
- Sudden confusion, a seizure, or passing out
- A head injury while on a blood thinner, or heavy bleeding

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/stroke-warning-signs-prevention/patient

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