

Gerontology Department

Stroke / TIA

What is Stroke and TIA?

- Both stroke and TIA are medical emergencies
- TIA stands for **Transient Ischaemic Attack** and is some times called mini stroke.
- When symptoms last for more than 24 hours it is called a **stroke**, while symptoms lasting for less than 24 hours is regarded as a **TIA**. Both conditions result from the interruption of blood flow to part of the brain.

What are the common symptoms and signs?

- Weakness (paralysis) of one side of body.
- Difficulty in speaking.
- Difficulty in swallowing.
- Altered sensation on one side of the body.
- Loss of vision in one eye.

These symptoms occur suddenly.

FAST is a simple face, arm and speech test to do to diagnose stroke. **Test for these signs:**

- **Facial weakness:** Can the person smile? Is there drooping of the eye or mouth?
- **Arm weakness:** Can the person raise both arms?
- **Speech problems:** Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

Call for ambulance if any of above are present.

What are the common risk factors?

The following are common risk factors:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Diabetes mellitus.



Patient Information

- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat).
- High cholesterol.
- Life style related risk factors:
 - Smoking
 - Alcoholism
 - Obesity

What to do if you suspect stroke or TIA?

Immediately contact your doctor **who should assess you on the same day** or **dial 999**. In either case you should ask for and be directed to stroke specialist services after you have received initial advice.

What common tests are normally required?

- You will need to have your glucose, cholesterol, ECG and some routine blood tests done.
- Most patients will need carotid Doppler (scan of blood flow to brain).
- Patients who have suffered a stroke will need a brain scan. Many with a TIA may also undergo a brain scan

What treatments are available?

- In the event of TIA or stroke, the cause or causes need to be found and addressed as soon as possible.
- Blood thinning medication (like aspirin or an alternative) needs to be started as soon as possible (within 48 hours) of the event in most cases.
- Your doctor should refer you to TIA Out-Patient service.
- You may require surgery on neck blood vessels, supplying blood to the brain, if there is blockage.
- In the event of a stroke you should be sent to hospital and admitted to the stroke unit.
- You may be given blood clot dissolving medications if this is appropriate.
- You may require stroke rehabilitation by specialist therapists.
- You will need advice on life style changes

Driving

You must not drive for a minimum of one month following a stroke. You do not need to inform the DVLA in this first month but you should inform your insurance company.

Patient Information

More information about driving following a stroke can be found in our other leaflet "Driving after a stroke or TIA". Please ask for a copy.

DVLA: www.direct.gov.uk/driverhealth

Where can I get further information on stroke related matters?

There are several national sources of information available:

The Stroke Association	0303 3033 100	www.stroke.org.uk
Different strokes (younger People)	0845 1307 172	www.differentstrokes.co.uk
Connect (advice on speech)	020 7367 0840	www.ukconnect.org
Carers UK (advice for carers)	0808 808 7777	www.carersuk.org
Benefits Disability Living Allowance	0345 605 6055	www.gov.uk/dwp
Benefits Attendance Allowance	0345 605 6055	www.gov.uk/dwp

Local sources of information and advice:

Stroke Services Coordinator Tel: 024 7696 8336

Stroke Specialist Nurse Tel: 024 7696 8336

Stroke Association, Coventry Family & Carer Support Service:

Tel: 024 7623 7031 or 07712326585

Tel: 024 7623 7030 or 07715064436

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the Stroke Specialist Nurse on 024 7696 8336 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

Document History

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