

## Stroke Services

# Stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA)

### What is stroke and TIA?

- Both stroke and TIA are medical emergencies
- TIA stands for **transient ischaemic attack** and is sometimes 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 happen 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 an ambulance if any of these are present.**



### **What are the common risk factors?**

The following are common risk factors:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Diabetes
- Irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation) High cholesterol
- Lifestyle 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 a carotid doppler scan. This involves passing a probe over the skin on your neck to check the blood flow to brain.
- Patients who have had a stroke will need a brain scan. Many people who have had a TIA may also have a brain scan.

### **What treatments are available?**

- If you have had a TIA or stroke, we will try to find the cause as soon as possible so that we can give you the right treatment straight away.
- Blood thinning medication (like aspirin or an alternative) needs to be started as soon as possible (within 48 hours) for most people.
- Your doctor should refer you to the TIA outpatient service.
- You may need surgery on the blood vessels in your neck that supply blood to the brain if there is blockage.
- If you have had a stroke, you should be sent to hospital and admitted to the stroke unit.

## Patient Information

- You may be given blood clot dissolving medications if this is appropriate.
- You may need stroke rehabilitation by specialist therapists.
- You will need advice on lifestyle changes

## Driving

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

More information about driving after 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](http://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](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

Different strokes (younger people)              0845 1307 172  
[www.differentstrokes.co.uk](http://www.differentstrokes.co.uk)

Carers UK (advice for carers)                      0808 808 7777  
[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Benefits   Disability Living Allowance              0345 605 6055  
[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://www.gov.uk/dwp)

Benefits   Attendance Allowance                  0345 605 6055  
[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://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

## Patient Information

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.

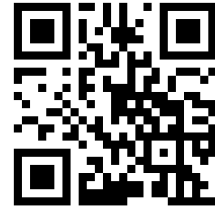
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[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)



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