

Stroke Services

Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) - accessing specialist stroke services in Coventry, Rugby and Warwickshire

What is a TIA?

A TIA is sometimes called a mini stroke or mild stroke. It is considered a warning or strong predictor of a full-blown stroke, so should not be ignored.

A TIA occurs when there is an interruption in the blood supply to your brain. It causes symptoms similar to having a stroke; you may experience slurred speech, weakness in your arm or leg, balance or visual problems.

However, as it is related to an interruption in blood supply, when the blood supply returns the symptoms go away. Your symptoms can last from anything from a couple of minutes to several hours.

What will happen next?

If you have been seen by your GP today:

The doctor who has seen you today will want you to be seen by a specialist stroke clinician.

If considered necessary, you will be asked to attend University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire **urgently** to see one of the stroke team specialists.



Patient Information

Your GP may give you a letter to bring with you. **It is very important that you attend this appointment.**

If you don't need to attend hospital today, you will be asked to attend **urgently** in the next week. The appointment may be as early as within the next 24 hours. If no one has contacted you within the next 24 hours with an appointment, please contact the stroke team on 024 7696 8335.

You will have been asked for a contact number and it is important you are available on this number within the next 24 hours.

In preparation for the consultation with the stroke specialist you will have blood tests, an ECG performed (a heart trace monitor), and may be started on blood thinning and cholesterol reducing medication. You may also be given some medication for your blood pressure.

If you have been seen in the Emergency Department today:

The doctor who has seen you today wants you to be seen **urgently** by a specialist stroke clinician.

You will be given an appointment to see the stroke specialist within 24 hours or 7 days according to need. If you are not from the Coventry, Rugby or Warwickshire area, you may be offered an appointment at your local hospital.

It is very important that you attend this appointment. It will take place on ward 41 at University Hospital.

Driving

It is important that you do not drive until after your consultation with the stroke specialist.

What will happen at this appointment?

The stroke specialist will examine you and discuss your diagnosis with you. It is sometimes helpful to bring a family member or friend with you, especially if they witnessed the event when it initially happened.

You may have a carotid doppler scan on the same day and then talk about the results with the stroke specialist.

A carotid doppler looks at the blood supply in your neck. It is not painful. Gel is put on your neck and then a probe is rubbed over the skin on your neck to look at the flow of blood in your carotid arteries.

Sometimes you may be sent for a CT or MRI scan on the day of the appointment. Again, this is a painless procedure, which involves you lying still for a short period of time.

Any further tests or consultations will be discussed with you by the stroke specialist as required.

The appointment could take up to 3 to 4 hours if these scans are required. Please bring a drink with you and maybe a book or newspaper to keep you occupied. Please also bring a list of your current medications with you.

In the meantime, please be aware of the signs and symptoms of a potential stroke and call for an ambulance if you suddenly have any of these:

Common symptoms and signs

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

These symptoms occur suddenly. Call an ambulance.

Patient Information

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?

Contacts

If you need further information about your appointment, contact the stroke team on 024 7696 8335.

If you need further information about TIAs or Strokes, contact Alexandra Hunter, Stroke Services Team Leader Tel 024 7696 8336

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

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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