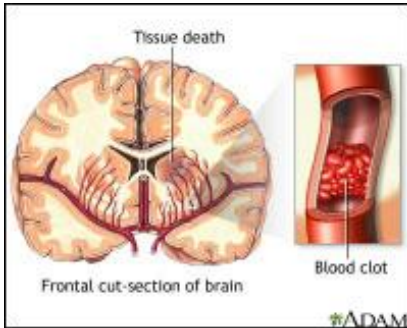




EMPLOYEE HEALTH INITIATIVE: NATIONAL STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

May is National Stroke Awareness Month



When Seconds Count, Can You Spot A Stroke?

If someone experienced a sudden stroke, would you recognize it and know what to do? Make a commitment to learn the stroke warning signs and where stroke hospitals exist in your area. Stroke is a medical emergency and can happen to anyone, at any time and at any age.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. It is also a leading cause of serious long-term disability. That's why it's so important to reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur. Learn to recognize a stroke. A stroke is a medical emergency. Know these warning signs of stroke and teach them to others. Every second counts.

Stroke Warning Signs

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, don't delay! Knowing the symptoms of stroke and calling 9-1-1 immediately if someone appears to be having a stroke are crucial steps in getting prompt emergency medical care for a stroke. New treatments are available that can reduce the damage caused by a stroke for some victims, but these treatments need to be given soon after the symptoms start.

- ✓ **Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.**
- ✓ **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.**
- ✓ **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.**
- ✓ **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance and coordination.**
- ✓ **Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.**



If you think someone is having a stroke, you should call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services immediately. Receiving immediate treatment is critical in lowering the risk of disability and even death. Immediately call 9-1-1 or your emergency response number so an ambulance (ideally with advanced life support) can be sent for you. Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms

appeared. It's very important to take immediate action. If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke. tPA is the only FDA-approved medication for the treatment of stroke within three hours of stroke symptom onset. But to be effective, these drugs must be given relatively quickly after heart attack or stroke symptoms first appear. So again, don't delay — get help right away!

Quick Facts

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. In 2006, 137,119 people died from stroke in the United States.
- Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability.
- About 795,000 strokes occur in the United States each year. About 610,000 of these are first or new strokes. About 185,000 occur in people who have already had a stroke before.
- Nearly three-quarters of all strokes occur in people aged 65 years or older. The risk of having a stroke doubles each decade after the age of 55.
- Strokes can—and do—occur at ANY age. Nearly 25% of strokes occur in people younger than age 65.
- Stroke death rates are higher for African Americans than for whites, even at younger ages.
- According to the American Heart Association, stroke will cost almost \$73.7 billion in both direct and indirect costs in 2010.
- *It has been noted for several decades that the southeastern United States has the highest stroke mortality rates in the country. It is not completely clear what factors might contribute to the higher incidence of and mortality from stroke in this region.*
- People with a family history of stroke have a higher risk.

Prevention: Healthy Lifestyle Choices Can Lower Your Stroke Risk

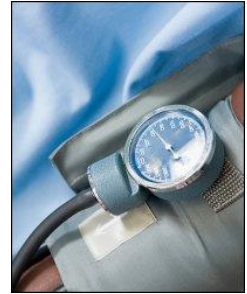
Knowing your risk of stroke and doing what you can to decrease or control your risk is the best approach to preventing stroke and stroke-related disability. All people can take steps to lower their risk for stroke, whether they have had a stroke or not. Things you can do to lower the risk of stroke include steps to prevent and control high blood pressure, heart disease, and other chronic conditions,



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE OFFICE OF HEALTH SERVICES

eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercise, not smoking, and not drinking too much alcohol (drinking more than two drinks per day on average for men or more than one drink per day on average for women).

- ❖ **Prevent and control high blood pressure.** [See our high blood pressure fact sheet.](#)
- ❖ **Prevent and control diabetes.** [CDC's diabetes program Web site.](#)
- ❖ **Abstain from tobacco use.** [CDC's tobacco intervention and prevention source Web site.](#)
- ❖ **Treat atrial fibrillation.** [See our fact sheet on this condition.](#)
- ❖ **Prevent and control high blood cholesterol.** [See our cholesterol fact sheet.](#)
- ❖ **Maintain a healthy weight.** [CDC's nutrition and physical activity program Web site.](#)
- ❖ **Keep regular physical activity.** [CDC's nutrition and physical activity program Web site.](#)
- ❖ **Eat healthy food.** [CDC's nutrition and physical activity program Web site.](#)



What Is a Stroke?

Stroke is a type of cardiovascular disease. It affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, so it starts to die.

What Are the Types of Stroke?

Stroke can be caused either by a clot obstructing the flow of blood to the brain (ischemic strokes) or by a blood vessel rupturing and preventing blood flow to the brain (Hemorrhagic or bleeding strokes).

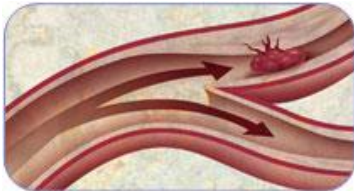
Types of Stroke

[Clot \(Ischemic\)](#) | [Bleed \(Hemorrhagic\)](#) | [TIA \(Transient Ischemic Attack\)](#)

If we consider an isolated blood vessel, blood flow to the brain tissue can be hampered in two ways:

- ❖ the vessel clogs within (ischemic stroke)
- ❖ the vessel ruptures, causing blood to leak into the brain (hemorrhagic stroke)

Ischemic: Ischemic stroke accounts for about 87 percent of all cases. [View a detailed animation of ischemic stroke.](#) Ischemic strokes occur as a result of an obstruction within a blood vessel supplying blood to the brain. The underlying condition for this type of obstruction is the development of fatty deposits lining the vessel walls. This condition is called atherosclerosis. These fatty deposits can cause two types of obstruction: Cerebral thrombosis refers to a thrombus (blood clot) that develops at the clogged part of the vessel. *Cerebral embolism* refers generally to a blood clot that forms at another location in the circulatory system, usually the heart and large arteries of the upper chest and neck. A portion of the blood clot breaks loose, enters the bloodstream and travels through the brain's blood vessels until it reaches vessels too small to let it pass. A second important cause of embolism is an irregular heartbeat, known as atrial fibrillation. It creates conditions where clots can form in the heart, dislodge and travel to the brain.



[click to enlarge](#)

Hemorrhagic: Hemorrhagic stroke accounts for about 13 percent of stroke cases. Click here to : [View a detailed illustration of hemorrhagic stroke.](#) It results from a weakened vessel that ruptures and bleeds into the surrounding brain. The blood accumulates and compresses the surrounding brain tissue. The two types of hemorrhagic strokes are intracerebral hemorrhage or subarachnoid hemorrhage. Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a weakened blood vessel ruptures. Two types of weakened blood vessels usually cause hemorrhagic stroke: aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations (AVMs). An *aneurysm* is a ballooning of a weakened region of a blood vessel. If left untreated, the aneurysm continues to weaken until it ruptures and bleeds into the brain. [Learn more about cerebral aneurysm.](#) An *arteriovenous malformation (AVM)* is a cluster of abnormally formed blood vessels. Any one of these vessels can rupture, also causing bleeding into the brain. [Learn more about AVM.](#)

Life After a Stroke

[Recovering and Finding Support:](#) You're not alone in your journey to recover. Find tips for daily living, regaining your independence and getting the support you need.

[Healthy Living After Stroke:](#) If you've had a stroke, your risk of having another one is higher than the stroke risk of someone who's never had a stroke. By controlling the risk factors, you can reduce your risk of having another stroke.

[For Family Caregivers:](#) We provide practical information and resources for taking care of yourself and your loved one as well as personal stories from other stroke family caregivers across the country.

Information for this article is from: <http://www.cdc.gov/> and <http://www.strokeassociation.org>.