



# Stroke



## What is a stroke?

A stroke is when the blood supply to the brain is cut off or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts or leaks.

There are three main types of stroke:

- > Ischemic stroke (caused by blood clots)
- > Haemorrhagic stroke (caused by a burst blood vessel that causes bleeding to the brain)
- > Transient ischemic attack (TIA) (a "mini-stroke," caused by a temporary blood clot)

## What causes a stroke?

The lack of blood flow that supplies oxygen-rich blood to the brain becomes blocked which causes a stroke.

## What are the risk factors for a stroke?

- > Irregular pulse known as Atrial Fibrillation (AF)
- > High blood pressure
- > High cholesterol
- > Smoking
- > Obesity or being overweight
- > Poor diet
- > Lack of exercise
- > Alcohol
- > Diabetes
- > Age, sex and family history of stroke

**Managing your risk for stroke with simple but important lifestyle changes can go a long way towards prevention.**



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## What are the signs and symptoms - and what do I do?

The National Stroke Foundation recommends the F.A.S.T. test as an easy way to remember the most common signs of stroke. Using the F.A.S.T. test involves asking these simple questions:

- ! **Face:** Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- ! **Arms:** Can they lift both arms?
- ! **Speech:** Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- ! **Time:** Is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

### Other signs and symptoms may be:

- ! Weakness or numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.
- ! Dizziness, loss of balance or an unexplained fall.
- ! Loss of vision, sudden blurring or decreased vision in one or both eyes.
- ! Headache, usually severe and abrupt onset or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.
- ! Difficulty swallowing.

## For more information

Contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health worker. Aboriginal Chronic Care workers are located in NSW Health Services and some Aboriginal Medical Services.

PDFs can be downloaded and printed from Chronic Care for Aboriginal People Program: [www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap](http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap)

Email: [ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au)

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## How can I lower my risk of a stroke?

Strokes are often deadly—but they can be prevented by taking some simple steps:

- ✓ If you smoke, try and quit
- ✓ Choose smaller portions and fewer kilojoules
- ✓ Eat more fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Make water your drink
- ✓ Be active every day
- ✓ Sit less and move more
- ✓ Take all prescribed medication especially if you are on blood thinning medication to prevent clots
- ✓ Get your doctor, or health worker to check your blood pressure at each visit
- ✓ Get your cholesterol levels checked yearly
- ✓ Limit alcohol intake
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight range

## Free services

- > **Get Healthy Service**  
Call the 'Get Healthy Service' for free personal telephone coaching to support you with your physical activity goals'. Your free NSW Health service provides the expertise and motivation you need to help reach your goals.  
[www.gethealthynsw.com.au](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au)  
or call 1300 806 258
- > **NSW Health Make Healthy Normal**  
[www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au](http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au)



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