

Cerebellar Stroke



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Arteries carry blood that contains oxygen to the brain. The flow of blood through the arteries can stop if the artery is blocked or bleeds. This is called a stroke. It is also known as a cerebrovascular accident or CVA. This handout looks at what occurs when a stroke happens in the part of the brain called the cerebellum.

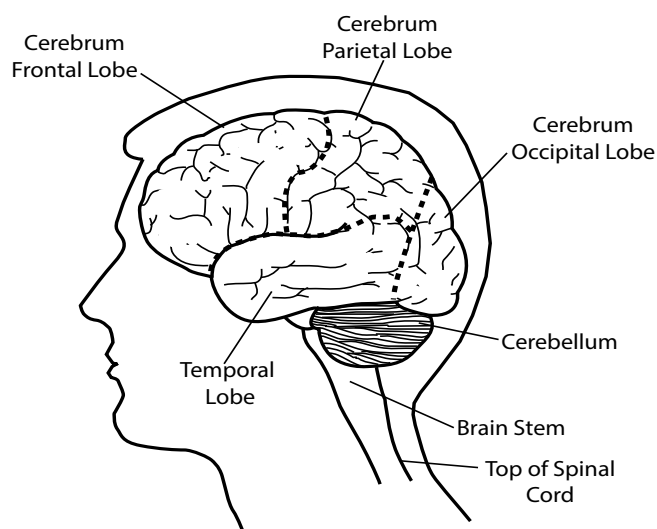
Effects

The cerebellum is the lower part of the back of the brain. The cerebellum coordinates body movement, controls eye movement, and adjusts posture to stay upright.

Based on where the blockage occurs, the effects will vary with this type of stroke.

Damage can cause changes in:

- Movement and sensation
- Balance
- Speech and Swallowing
- Vision



Changes in Movement and Sensation

This type of stroke can cause the loss of coordinated movement, called **ataxia**. When the person moves, they may have tremors or problems starting or ending movements. The person may have trouble placing their arms and legs where they want them.

- For example, the person may try to pick up a cup, but miss it when reaching for it. Or when walking, step far out to the side.

Ataxia may also happen to the muscles in the trunk of the body. This causes the body to be unable to coordinate how the muscles move together. This is often on the same side of the body where the cerebellar damage occurred.

A person may also have a loss of feeling for pain and temperature, but this is less common. It can happen on one side of the body or both.

Changes in Balance

Problems with balance are common. The person may fall towards the side where there is ataxia. Preventing falls or other accidents are safety concerns.

The person may have **vertigo**, which is dizziness or the sensation that the body is spinning when the person is not moving. It can also cause the person to have nausea or vomiting.

Problems with Speech and Swallowing

If the muscles in the mouth and throat are affected, problems can occur with speaking and swallowing. The voice may be hoarse and the person may not be able to speak loudly. Changes to what they are eating and drinking may be needed to avoid choking or other problems with swallowing.

Changes in Vision

Rapid eye movements, called **nystagmus**, can happen when the person moves in certain directions. This may add to the problem of vertigo.

Eye problems can occur on the side of the cerebellar damage. The person may have a small pupil, a droopy eyelid, or problems moving the eye to look to the side.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.