A transient ischemic attack, or TIA, may be called a warning stroke or mini stroke. A TIA is a brief stop of blood flow to the brain that can cause signs of a stroke. A TIA can last a few seconds up to 24 hours. Unlike an actual stroke, a TIA does not kill brain cells, so there is no lasting damage to the brain.

Having a TIA can be a serious warning sign of stroke and should not be ignored. About 1 in 3 people who have a TIA go on to have a stroke.

**Signs**

The signs of a TIA are the same as for a stroke, except they do not last long. These may include:

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

If you or another person has any of these signs, for even a short amount of time, **call 911 or seek emergency care right away. Stroke is an emergency.**

**Is it TIA or stroke?**

You cannot tell if you are having a TIA or stroke. Only a doctor can tell the difference.

- If you are having a stroke, emergency treatment could save your life and improve your chances for a good recovery.
- If you are having a TIA, your doctor can identify and treat the causes. This may lower your risk of having a stroke in the future.
- See your doctor if you had any signs, even if the signs are painless or go away quickly.
Causes
A TIA is often caused by a major artery or smaller blood vessels that carry blood to the brain becoming blocked or narrow. The blockage may be from fatty deposits, called plaque, or from blood clots.

Treatment and Prevention
If you do have a TIA, medicine and other treatments used by your doctor will be based on the exact cause of your TIA.

There are things you can do to reduce your risk of a stroke. Ask your doctor about the best options for you. Most strokes can be prevented.

Key lifestyle risk factors for stroke include:
• Smoking
• Being overweight
• Drinking too much alcohol
• Having a diet too high in cholesterol and fat

To reduce your risk:
• Take medicines as ordered by your doctor. Do not change or stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor.
• Control high blood pressure. Have your blood pressure checked often and talk with your doctor about treatment options.
• Keep your blood sugar in the recommended range if you have diabetes.
• Follow a low cholesterol, low fat diet.
• Quit smoking or using other tobacco products.
• Avoid alcohol, drug abuse, or recreational drug use.
• Exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week.
• Keep your weight at the right amount for your height.
• Lower your stress level by using relaxation exercises and doing things you enjoy.