Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

A transient ischemic attack, or TIA, may be called a warning stroke or mini stroke. A TIA is a brief interruption 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 can be a serious warning sign of a 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 are only temporary. Signs may include:

- 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, 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.

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You cannot tell if you are having a stroke or a TIA, 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 reduce your risk for future strokes.** Be sure to 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:

- Low blood flow because of a blockage or narrowing in a major artery carrying blood to the brain, like a carotid artery in your neck
- A blood clot in another part of the body, such as the heart, that breaks off and travels to the brain, blocking a blood vessel in the brain
- Narrowing of a smaller blood vessel in the brain from plaque that blocks blood flow for a short period of time

## Treatment and Prevention

The 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 stroke prevention options for you. Most strokes can be prevented.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.