Stroke

What is a stroke?
A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. This is due to a change in the blood flow to the brain. Cerebral vascular accident (CVA) is another name for a stroke.

What causes a stroke?
- Thrombus is a clot that forms on the wall of a blood vessel in the brain. The clot stops the flow of blood.
- Embolus is a clot in a blood vessel that moves to the brain where it blocks blood flow.
- Hemorrhage is bleeding which causes pressure on the brain cells.

What are the effects of a stroke?
The effects of a stroke depend on the location in the brain and amount of damage to the brain. There may be changes in behavior or in your ability to do daily activities.
- Damage to the right side of the brain may cause:
  - Loss of movement to the left side of the body called hemiplegia
  - Quick and impulsive behavior
  - Problems with memory
  - Lack of attention to where the left side of the body is positioned (neglect)

More on next page ➔
Problems with swallowing
Problems with remembering how to do daily activities
Problems with language

• Damage to the left side of the brain may cause:
  ▶ Loss of movement to the right side of the body called hemiplegia
  ▶ Problems with talking and understanding or aphasia
  ▶ Slow and cautious behavior
  ▶ Problems with remembering how to do daily activities
  ▶ Problems with swallowing
  ▶ Lack of attention to where the right side of the body is positioned (neglect)

What are the factors which may lead to a stroke?
• High blood pressure
• Stress
• Diabetes
• Heart Disease
• Smoking
• Diet too high in cholesterol and fat
• Family history of stroke
• Too much alcohol
• Previous strokes
• Drug abuse
• Obesity
• Lack of exercise
• Atrial fibrillation

What are the warning signs of a stroke?
• Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, most often 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

Call 911 if you have any signs of a stroke.
What can you do to help prevent a stroke?

- Visit your doctor regularly to check your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol.
- Take medicines as ordered. Do not change or stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor.
- Quit smoking or using other tobacco products.
- Lower your stress level by using relaxation exercises and recreation.
- Follow a low cholesterol, low fat diet.
- Exercise regularly at least 3 times per week.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Keep your weight at the right amount for your height.
- Keep your blood sugar in the recommended range if you have diabetes.
- Be aware of your family history.
- See your doctor if you have any of the warning signs.

To Learn More

To learn more about a certain type of stroke and problems that may occur, ask for any of these handouts:

- Basal Ganglia Stroke
- Brainstem Stroke
- Effects of Anterior Cerebral Artery Stroke
- Effects of Cerebellar Stroke
- Effects of Left Middle Cerebral Artery Stroke
- Effects of Right Middle Cerebral Artery Stroke
- Hemorrhagic Stroke
- Posterior Cerebral Artery (PCA) Stroke

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.