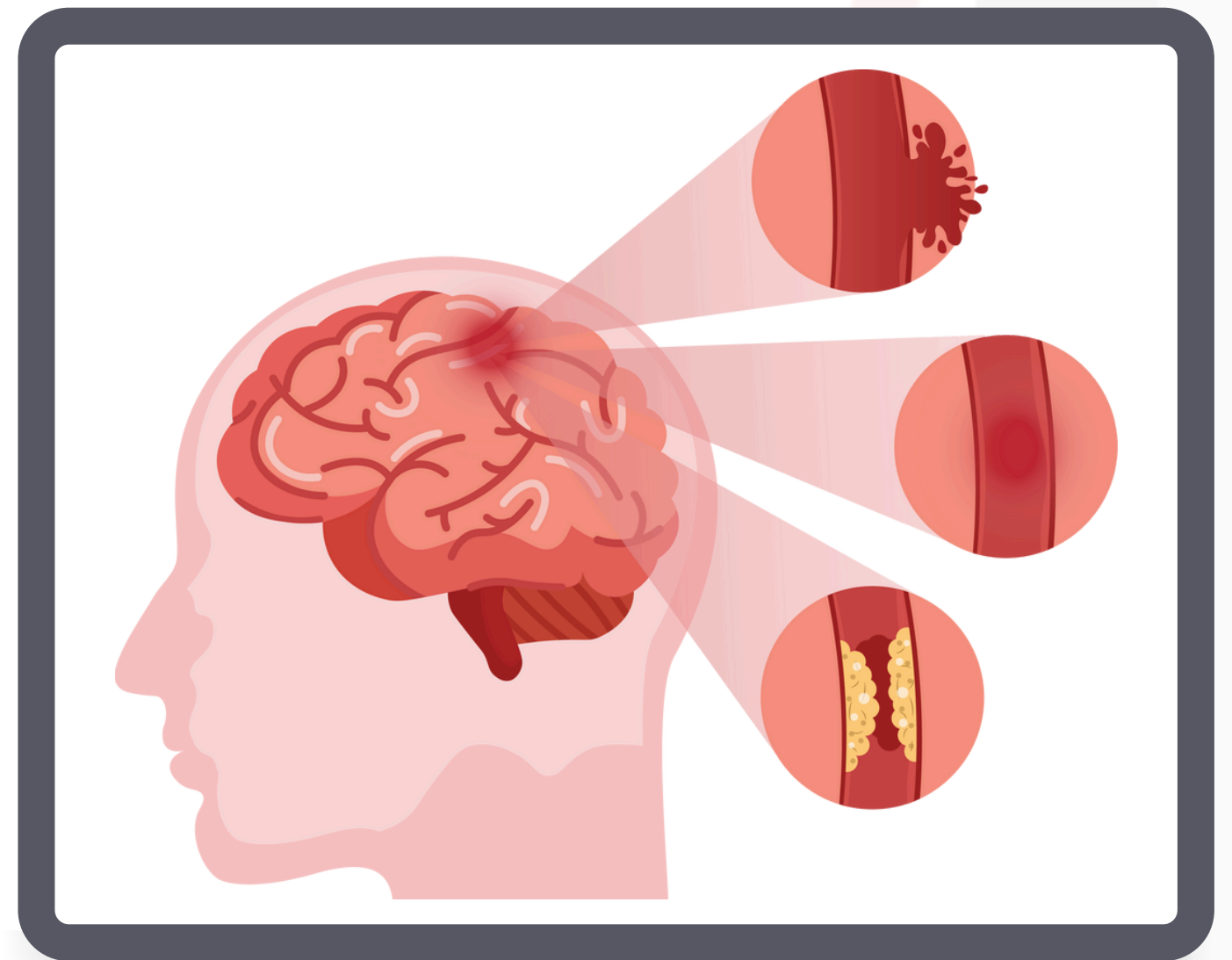


STROKE 101

WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke occurs when blood supply to the brain is interrupted, leading to brain cell damage. The impact of a stroke varies based on the affected area of the brain and the extent of the damage.



WHAT IS A TIA?

A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is a “mini -stroke”. Like a stroke, a TIA can happen suddenly, without warning. TIA symptoms may last a few minutes or up to 24 hours. The difference between a stroke and a TIA is that the symptoms of TIA eventually go away.

WHY IS STROKE AN EMERGENCY?

Your brain controls all bodily functions. The longer its blood supply is disrupted, the more brain cells may be lost. If a stroke is suspected, call 911 immediately. Doctors can administer a clot-busting drug to restore blood flow, but it must be given quickly after the stroke occurs. Do not delay—call 911 right away.

WHY IS TIA AN EMERGENCY?

A TIA is a serious warning that a stroke may occur in the future. It shares the same warning signs as a stroke, so don't wait to see if symptoms disappear. Call 911 immediately. Even if the symptoms fade or go away quickly, a doctor must determine their cause to help prevent a future stroke.

Recognizing the signs of a stroke is important. Remember *FAST*:



FACE

is it drooping?



ARM

can you raise both?



SPEECH

is it slurred/jumbled?



TIME

time to call 911



Stroke Network
Southwestern Ontario

February 2025 | swostroke.ca

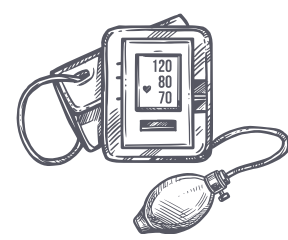
STROKE RISK FACTORS

MODIFIABLE



Smoking and Vaping

Smoking may triple the risk of dying from stroke.



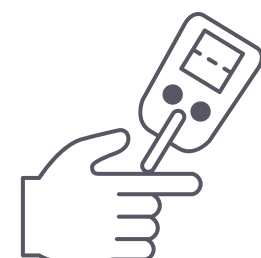
Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is the number one risk factor of stroke and often has no warning signs or symptoms.



Unhealthy Diet

Diets high in fat, sugar, processed and/or salty foods may increase the risk of high blood pressure, weight gain and diabetes. About 75% of salt that is eaten comes from eating out or from processed food.



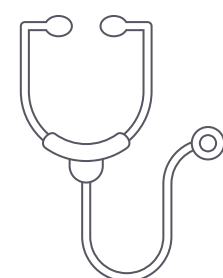
Diabetes

High blood sugar levels may damage the arteries and could lead to high blood pressure.



Not Enough Exercise

Lack of exercise may result in an increased risk for high blood pressure, diabetes, weight gain and higher stress levels.



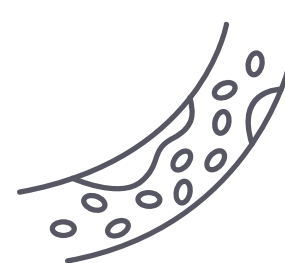
Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial Fibrillation is an irregular heart rhythm that can lead to blood clots forming in the heart that may travel to the brain impacting blood flow.



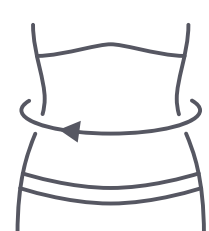
Too Much Alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol may increase your blood pressure and risk of stroke.



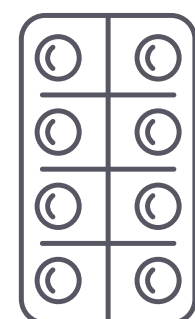
Cholesterol

High cholesterol may lead to the buildup of fat (plaque) on artery walls, narrowing the path for blood to flow and increasing stroke risk.



Unhealthy Weight

Excess weight may contribute to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and sleep apnea.



Birth Control/Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Medications that contain estrogen may increase risk of stroke.



Stress

High stress levels may be linked with unhealthy lifestyle patterns. Stress can also lead to high blood pressure, obesity, anxiety and depression.



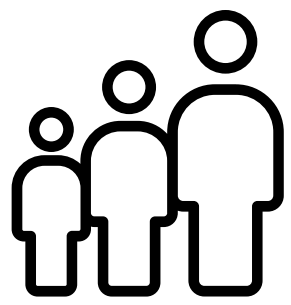
Recreational Drug Use

Drug users may have a risk of stroke that is six times higher than non-drug users.



STROKE RISK FACTORS

NON-MODIFIABLE



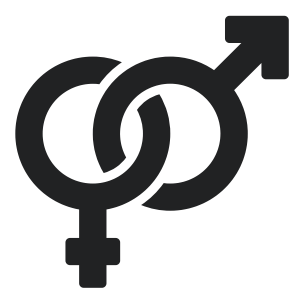
Age

Stroke can occur at any age. As you get older your risk of stroke increases.



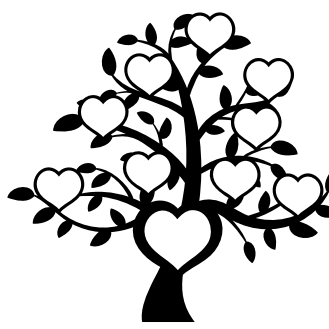
African and South Asian Heritage

People of African or South Asian heritage may have a higher risk of stroke as they are more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes.



Sex

The risk of stroke may increase after menopause.



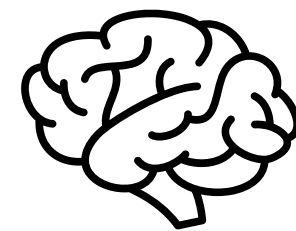
Family History

The risk of stroke is increased if a family member has had a stroke before the age of 65.



Indigenous Heritage

First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples may have a higher risk for stroke as they are more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes.



Prior Stroke or Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

The risk of a stroke is greater if there has been a prior stroke and/or TIA.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of a stroke or TIA. Luckily, almost 80% of strokes can be prevented through healthy behaviours.

- If you smoke or take drugs, take steps to quit.
- Exercise for at least 150 minutes weekly.
- Eat a balanced diet that follows Canada's Food Guide.
- If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to small amounts.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly by your healthcare provider.
- If you have atrial fibrillation, take your medications as prescribed.
- Manage your cholesterol levels by limiting intake of processed and high fat foods.
- If you have diabetes, work with a health care provider to keep it under control.
- Identify your stressors and take steps to manage them, if possible.
- Take all of your medication as prescribed.
- Be aware of the warning signs of stroke/TIA.

If you are experiencing signs of a stroke, Don't Drive CALL 911. For more information speak to your healthcare provider and visit www.heartandstroke.ca