



WHAT IS A **STROKE?**



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A stroke is a brain attack. It can be fatal.

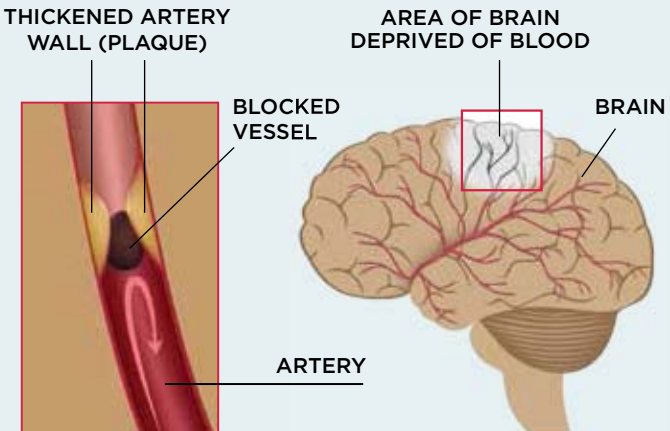
A stroke happens when a blockage such as a clot blocks the blood flow to the brain, or when a burst blood vessel bleeds into the brain.

During a stroke, the cells in the affected part of the brain start to die and that part of the brain cannot work properly. This can affect a person's ability to walk, talk, eat, see, read, socialise or do things they were able to do before the stroke.

Many people with stroke may also have fatigue or problems with remembering, understanding or thinking properly.

BLOCKED BLOOD VESSEL IN BRAIN CAUSING A STROKE

Blood supply in brain is blocked or insufficient



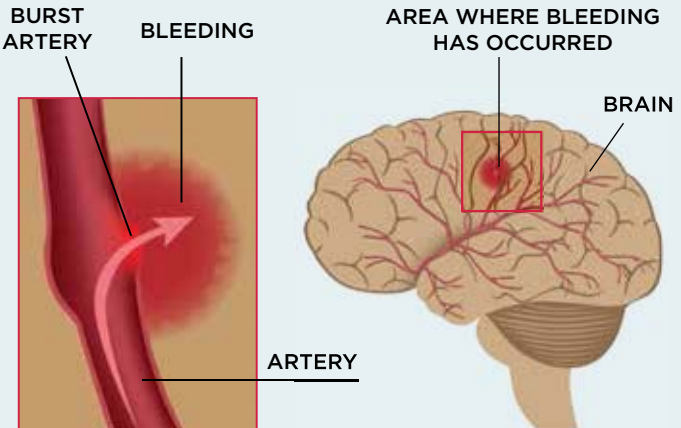
IMPACT OF STROKE

Different parts of the brain control a person's movements, senses, emotions and intellectual functions. The effects of stroke depend on which part of the brain is damaged and how severe the damage is.

Disabilities from stroke range from slight to severe. Some people make a speedy recovery and return to their normal lives. Others have disabilities that may improve with time and can be managed. For many, disabilities may last a lifetime. A small number of people will need full time medical care.

BLEED INTO BRAIN CAUSING A STROKE

Blood vessel expands and bursts, with bleeding into brain



WHO DOES STROKE AFFECT?

Anyone can have a stroke. Although strokes often happen to older people, a quarter of all strokes in New Zealand occur in people still in the workforce or younger – even children and babies have strokes.

Stroke is largely preventable, yet each year about 9,000 people in this country have a stroke. This number would be more than halved if all the recommended actions to reduce stroke risks (see next section) were taken in the community.



Although strokes often happen to older people, a quarter of all strokes in New Zealand occur in people of working age or younger.

REDUCING YOUR RISK OF STROKE

There are things you can do to prevent stroke happening to you or someone you care about. Certain risk factors increase your chances of having a stroke. Knowing what they are means you can take action to lower your risk.

Check your



blood pressure regularly so you can take steps to reduce it if necessary



cholesterol so it can be reduced if the levels are too high



heart beat. An irregular heart beat, called atrial fibrillation, can cause stroke. Medication can treat this.

- **Eat a healthy diet and reduce salt.** This helps lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol
- **Stop smoking.** If you smoke and have high blood pressure you are up to 18 times more likely to have a stroke than a non-smoker your own age with normal blood pressure
- **Move more.** Regular exercise and being active will help reduce many risk factors
- **Keep your alcohol intake low.** Drinking more than two small alcoholic drinks per day can increase your risk of stroke
- **Lose weight.** Being overweight puts extra strain on your blood vessels and heart. Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly will help control your weight
- **Take medication** as prescribed by your doctor.

SEE A STROKE

F



FACE
DROOPING
ON ONE SIDE

A



ARM
WEAKNESS
ON ONE SIDE

S



SPEECH
JUMBLED,
SLURRED OR
LOST

T



TIME
TO **CALL 111**

If you see any of these signs, call 111 immediately.
Getting help fast means a better chance of recovery.

STROKE
FOUNDATION

OF NEW ZEALAND

0800 787 653
stroke.org.nz