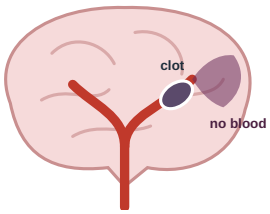
SafeServe First Aid

STROKE EXPLAINED

Stroke: what it is and how it looks

A stroke is a **medical emergency**. It happens when the blood flow to part of the brain is disrupted. Brain cells are not getting the oxygen and nutrients they need, so they can be damaged or die. What it does to a person depends on which part of the brain is affected.

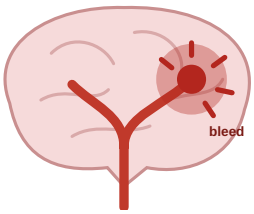
Three types of stroke



Ischaemic stroke

say: iss-KEE-mik

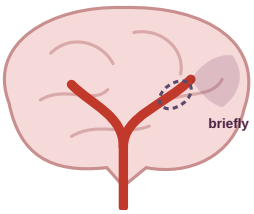
An artery supplying the brain is blocked by a blood clot.



Haemorrhagic stroke

say: hem-or-AJ-ik

A blood vessel bursts and bleeds into the brain.



Mini-stroke (TIA)

say: tee-eye-ay

Blood flow is briefly interrupted. Usually passes in seconds or minutes.

How it looks: think FAST



one side droops

F

Face

One side may droop, including the mouth or eye. It may be hard to smile.



one arm drifts down

A

Arms

It may be difficult to raise both arms and keep them up.



slurred or confused

S

Speech

Speech may be slurred, unclear or confused.



call 999 now

T

Time

If you see any of these signs, call 999 immediately.

Other signs to watch for

- Weakness or numbness down one side
- Blurry vision or loss of sight in one or both eyes
- Difficulty finding words
- Confusion and memory loss
- Severe headache

Who is at higher risk

- Had a stroke or heart attack before
- Aged over 55
- Close relative with a stroke
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Atrial fibrillation (AF)

AF is said AY-tree-al fib-ri-LAY-shun. The top chambers do not empty properly, so a clot can form and travel to the brain.

Call 999 immediately if you think someone is having a stroke.

Signs can pass after a short time. Get help even if symptoms stop. Do not delay because you think hospitals are too busy. The brain can be damaged every minute without treatment.

Source: British Heart Foundation, Stroke. Always call 999 in an emergency.

Learn first aid hands-on.
safeservefirstaid.co.uk | Peterborough