

# What is Stroke?

How to avoid it and what to do if it happens.

A **stroke** occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain can't get the blood it needs, so brain cells die. Left untreated or treated too late, stroke can be devastating and even fatal.

## RISK FACTORS

### AGE

The older you are, the more likely you are to have a stroke. Risk doubles each **decade after 55**.

### GENES COUNT

Family history of **high blood pressure** can lead to stroke.

### MEDICAL HISTORY

People who have had a stroke, or have **diabetes** or **A-fib** are at a higher risk.

### RACIAL/GENDER MARKERS

**Women** are at higher risk for stroke. So are **African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans**.

## STROKE IN THE U.S.

EACH YEAR

**795,000+**

people suffer a stroke.

EVERY

**40 SECONDS**

someone has a stroke.

STROKES CAN OCCUR AT ANY AGE

**75%** of strokes happen in people **65+**

Stroke is the **FIFTH** leading cause of death in the U.S.

## LOWERING YOUR ODDS



GET ACTIVE!



EAT RIGHT.



QUIT SMOKING.



CUT DOWN ON ALCOHOL.



GET REGULAR CHECKUPS.



GET ENOUGH REST.



STAY SOCIAL.



MINIMIZE STRESS.

## KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND ACT FAST

**F**

**FACE**

Ask them to **smile**. Does their face droop on one side?

**A**

**ARM**

Ask them to raise both arms. Does one arm **drift** down?

**S**

**SPEECH**

Ask them to **talk**. Are they mumbling or slurring?

**S**

**SIGHT**

Have they experienced a sudden loss of **vision**?

**T**

**TIME**

Every minute counts. **Call 911 immediately.**

Quick action is the most important factor in treating stroke. Mercy's stroke specialists provide immediate and comprehensive care.

To learn more, talk to your doctor. Find a Mercy primary care provider at [mercy.net/ActNow](https://mercy.net/ActNow)