

# Understanding Stroke

When it comes to stroke, know how to BEFAST. It can help save your life.

## What is Stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain either bursts, ruptures (hemorrhagic) or is blocked by a clot (ischemic). As a result, the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, and the affected parts of the brain begin dying.

## Preventing Stroke

There are certain factors that increase your chances of having a stroke. Some of these factors can be controlled, but others cannot be controlled. Some of the (uncontrollable) factors include having had a previous stroke, race, age (stroke can occur at any age, but your risk for stroke doubles every 10 years after age 55), gender (men have an increased risk of stroke) and a family history of stroke.

Let your primary care provider work with you to help you with the things you can and can't control.

*Focus on making changes to prevent stroke.*

## Risk Factors That Can Be Controlled

*Including but not limited to:*

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Cigarette smoking
- Excess weight and/or not exercising
- Peripheral artery disease
- Carotid or other artery disease
- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heart rate)
- Other heart disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Poor diet

## Warning Signs of Stroke

Warning signs that you may be having a stroke include:

- Sudden loss of balance or coordination, dizziness, or trouble walking
- Sudden loss of vision or trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden numbness of the face or facial drooping
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden loss of speech, trouble speaking, confusion or trouble understanding
- Sudden severe headache



## BALANCE

Sudden Loss of Balance or Coordination



## EYES

Sudden Loss of Vision



## FACE

Sudden Numbness or Weakness of Face



## ARMS

Sudden Numbness or Weakness of Arm or Leg



## SPEECH

Sudden Loss of Speech or Confusion



## TIME

Time Symptoms Started and Time to Call 911

If you suspect stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately!

