

Understanding Strokes

Your guide to prevention and care



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Am I at risk for a stroke?

Stroke is the fourth-leading cause of death in the U.S. and the leading cause of serious, long-term disability. A stroke can happen to anyone. If you are over age 55, have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, smoke or are African American, you are at an increased risk for a stroke.

A photograph of an older African American couple smiling and embracing each other on a golf course. The woman is wearing a light blue polo shirt and the man is wearing a yellow polo shirt. They are standing on a green lawn with trees in the background.

DID YOU KNOW?

Georgia is 1 of 11 Southeast states in the Stroke Belt, where stroke is more prevalent.

What is a stroke?

Simply put, a stroke is an interruption of the flow of blood to any part of the brain.

What are the signs of a stroke?

What should I do?

Recognizing the signs and calling 911 quickly gives the best chance of avoiding brain damage and its long-term effects. "BE FAST" is an easy way to remember and identify the most common symptoms of a stroke (see graphic below).

Treatment for a stroke must begin within 3 to 4.5 hours from the time the first symptoms appear. The faster the treatment, the better chance of a good outcome.

How can I manage my stroke risk factors?

According to the American Heart Association, there are some risks you cannot control. The good news is that there are many you can.

Risk factors you can control:

- » Blood pressure
- » Cholesterol
- » Tobacco use
- » Regular physical activity
- » Weight
- » Diabetes

Risk factors you cannot control:

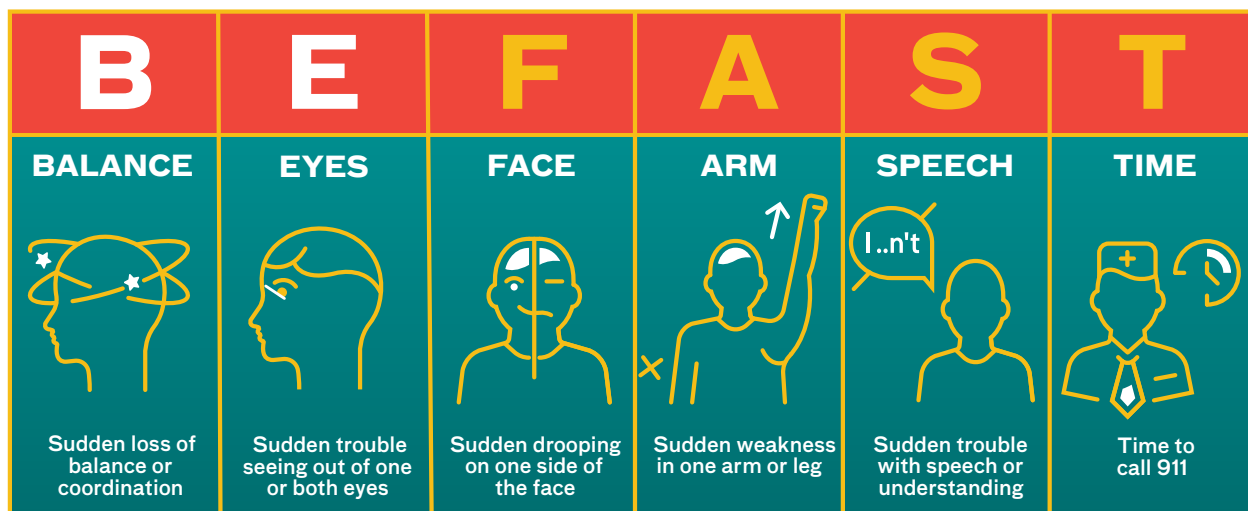
- » Age
- » Gender
- » Family history
- » Race
- » Previous stroke

Why do my heart-healthy numbers matter?

Knowing your heart-healthy numbers will help you spot early warning signs of stroke. Your doctor can help you manage these important numbers.

Know your numbers

- » Blood pressure: Below 120/80 mmHg
- » Cholesterol
 - LDL: Lower than 130; 70 to 100 (for high-risk individuals)
 - HDL: 40 or higher
 - Triglycerides: Under 150
- » Blood sugar: 100 mg/dL (fasting)
- » Body mass index (BMI): Lower than 30 (over 30 is obese)
- » Waist size in men: smaller than 40 inches
- » Waist size in women: smaller than 35 inches



Also look for a sudden, severe headache with no known cause.



80% of strokes are preventable: Manage your risk

Eat right

» Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and meals you make yourself. Avoid foods with trans fat, high sugar and high sodium content.

Move it

- » Aim for 30 minutes of activity every day. Take it slowly at first. Talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise program.
- » Fitness trackers, mobile fitness apps and other wearable devices can help keep you motivated and up to date with your fitness and weight-loss goals.

Kick the habit

It's never too late to quit smoking! One year after you quit smoking, your risk of heart attack is cut in half. Five years after you quit, your risk is nearly the same as someone who has never smoked. Call 1-877-270-STOP (7867) for free 24/7 phone support by trained specialists (The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line).

“With stroke, time is brain. Every minute you delay seeking medical help, your brain can lose up to 2 million neurons. Act fast, because the longer you wait, the less likely it is that treatments will be effective and your chances of recovery will be reduced.”

KEN JONES, MD
ATRIUM HEALTH FLOYD SENIOR VICE
PRESIDENT & CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Not all strokes are the same

Ischemic stroke

This type of stroke occurs when a blood clot, or obstruction, in an artery prevents blood from flowing to the brain. This is the more common form of stroke; nearly 87% of all strokes are ischemic strokes.

The underlying condition for this type of obstruction is atherosclerosis, the development of fatty deposits lining the vessel walls.

Transient ischemic attack

A transient ischemic attack (TIA), or mini-stroke, occurs when blood flow to the brain suddenly stops for a short time, causing stroke-like symptoms. These symptoms can last anywhere from a few minutes up to 2 hours. Like any other stroke, a TIA requires immediate emergency care. Having a TIA puts you at greater risk of experiencing a full-blown stroke.

Hemorrhagic stroke

This type of stroke occurs when a blood vessel inside the brain bursts or leaks. The blood can put pressure on the brain, which can damage brain cells. Hemorrhagic stroke accounts for about 13% of stroke cases, but tends to have a higher mortality rate than ischemic stroke.

There are 2 types of hemorrhagic strokes: subarachnoid hemorrhage and intracerebral hemorrhage. Subarachnoid hemorrhage (bleeding around the outside of the brain) is typically caused by weakened blood vessels such as aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations, while high blood pressure or unknown causes may lead to intracerebral hemorrhages (bleeding inside the brain tissue).



DID YOU KNOW?

Diabetes is a major risk factor for stroke. Controlling your blood glucose levels, working with your health care team and developing healthy lifestyle changes can reduce your risk.

Specialized care from the start

Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center is recognized as a Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission, a nationally recognized review organization. This designation is a symbol of quality that demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of stroke care, our experienced staff and our ability to treat the most complex stroke cases. This means you can feel confident you're receiving the best care, from the moment you're admitted until the day you go home.



Team of stroke specialists

Our fellowship-trained, board-certified specialists are leaders in the field of stroke care. Our multidisciplinary team includes specialists in:

- » Neurology
- » Neurosurgery
- » Emergency medicine
- » Stroke rehab

Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center meets the national standard of treating stroke patients within 60 minutes of arrival at the hospital, known as door-to-needle time. The goal of such a quick response is to preserve as many brain cells as possible, which increases the chance of survival and recovery.





Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center is an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital and can quickly and effectively treat and stabilize stroke patients prior to sending them to a primary or comprehensive stroke center. Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center is just 22 miles north of Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center.

Stroke treatment tailored to your needs

- » We offer comprehensive care beginning the moment you arrive and continuing through your stroke treatment, recovery and beyond.
- » We quickly diagnose the source of your stroke and develop a treatment plan using our wide-ranging expertise and the most advanced technology.
- » We are involved in research on new stroke treatments and devices, giving you access to the latest innovations.
- » We guide you through recovery at Atrium Health Floyd Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation.
- » We offer individualized coaching and care plans to smooth your transition from hospital to home.
- » We maintain contact with you after you go home to screen for risks that could lead to complications or re-hospitalization.

Ischemic stroke treatment

Ischemic strokes and TIAs occur when a blood clot forms in an artery that supplies blood to the brain. To treat, the clot needs to be removed or dissolved and new ones need to be prevented from developing.

We do this with special medications, including blood thinners and anti-coagulants, as well as with surgical procedures.

Medications

Thrombolytics are medications that are injected into the bloodstream to dissolve blood clots in the arteries that supply blood to the brain. These drugs are a lot like a liquid clog remover that unclogs stopped-up drain pipes. Only instead of plumbing pipes, they work on arteries. Thrombolytic therapy is effective for ischemic stroke patients who receive it within a few hours of their ischemic stroke and who do not have any additional bleeding.

Hemorrhagic stroke treatment

A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel inside the brain bursts or leaks. The first step in treating a hemorrhagic stroke is determining the source of the leak. Common sources of a hemorrhagic stroke include aneurysm and arteriovenous malformations (AVM). Once the source has been identified, our stroke experts will determine the appropriate treatment method.

Our Primary Stroke Center

Awards and recognition

Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center has earned the following designations for stroke care:

- » Certified Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission. This certification recognizes centers that have the critical elements to achieve long-term success in improving outcomes for stroke patients.
- » Awarded Stroke Silver Plus with Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite and Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll recognition from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. These awards recognize the hospital's commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, leading to more lives saved and reduced disability. Patients with Type 2 diabetes, who might be at higher risk for complications, also receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized due to stroke.

Atrium Health Floyd Polk Medical Center is recognized as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital by The Joint Commission in collaboration with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association.

TeleStroke

TeleStroke, also called stroke telemedicine, is the process of a doctor with advanced experience in strokes, or vascular neurologist, virtually examining a suspected stroke patient over video. The goal of TeleStroke evaluation is to quickly evaluate and treat patients to improve the hospital's reaction time to emergency stroke care and patient's outcome.

Time is of the essence when saving brain cells. Emergency acute stroke support with our TeleStroke services can save lives and allow for better stroke care.



*Our stroke center received the
Get With The Guidelines - Stroke Silver
Plus quality award and Target: Stroke Honor
Roll Elite recognition*

For more information, call or visit:

706-509-5994
Floyd.org/Stroke



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