



Know the Signs and Symptoms of a Stroke



About Stroke

A stroke or cerebrovascular accident occurs when the blood supply to the brain is cut off (an ischemic stroke) or when a blood vessel bursts (a hemorrhagic stroke). Most strokes are of the ischemic type. Without oxygen, brain cells begin to die. Death or permanent disability can result. High blood pressure, smoking, and having had a previous stroke or heart attack increase a person's chances of having a stroke.

Stroke is a leading cause of death in the United States. Over 800,000 people die in the U.S. each year from cardiovascular disease and strokes. According to the American Heart Association, about 795,000 people in the United States suffer a stroke each year (about 610,000 first attacks and 185,000 recurrent attacks). Four million Americans who have survived a stroke are living with impairments and 15 to 30 percent are permanently disabled. The American Heart Association also estimates that stroke cost about \$53.9 billion in both direct and indirect costs in 2010 in the United States alone.

With timely treatment, the risk of death and disability from stroke can be lowered. It is very important to know the symptoms of a stroke and act in time.

CDC Activities to Reduce the Stroke Burden

[CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program](#)

CDC currently funds health departments in 32 states and the District of Columbia to develop, implement, and evaluate cardiovascular health promotion, disease prevention, and control programs and to eliminate health disparities. The programs emphasize the use of education, policies, environmental strategies, and systems changes to address heart disease and stroke in various settings and to ensure quality of care.

[Paul Coverdell National Acute Stroke Registry](#)

CDC funds four state health departments (Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, and North Carolina) to establish state-based Paul Coverdell National Acute Stroke Registries with the mission of monitoring, promoting, and improving the quality of acute stroke care in their states. These were established after testing and evaluating eight prototype projects. The data collected will guide quality improvement interventions at the hospital level that will fill the gap between clinical guidelines and practice. The registries will help facilitate necessary policy and system changes at national, state, and local levels that will result in improvement in patient outcomes. The long-term goal of this program is to ensure that all Americans receive the highest quality of acute stroke care that is available to reduce untimely deaths, prevent disability, and avoid recurrent strokes.

[Atlas of Stroke Mortality: Racial, Ethnic, and Geographic Disparities in the United States](#)

This publication presents an extensive series of national and state maps depicting disparities in

Signs of a Stroke

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke notes these major signs of stroke:

- **Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs**
- **Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others**
- **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
- **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination.**
- **Sudden severe headache with no known cause**

If you think someone is having a stroke, you should call 911 immediately.

county-level stroke death rates for the five largest U.S. racial and ethnic groups. This information will help health professionals and concerned citizens tailor prevention policies and programs to communities with the greatest burden of stroke.

For More Information

- [CDC's Stroke Web Site](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [American Stroke Association](#)
- [National Stroke Association](#)
- [Brain Attack Coalition](#)
- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#)

References

1. Roger VL, Go AS, Lloyd-Jones DM, et al. [Heart disease and stroke statistics—2011 update: a report from the American Heart Association](#) . *Circulation*. 2011 Feb 1;123(4):e18-e209. Epub 2010 Dec 15.
2. National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2003 Chartbook on the Health of Americans*. Hyattsville, MD: Department of Health and Human Services, 2003. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>. Accessed December 12, 2003.

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