

## What can I do?

The chance of having a stroke can be reduced by:

- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol low.
- Exercise and eat a healthy diet.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Do not smoke.

Other risk factors for stroke include age, diabetes and irregular heart beat. More information on these can be found in the National Stroke Foundation brochures on:

- High blood pressure and stroke.
- High cholesterol and stroke.
- What is Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)?
- Irregular heart beat and stroke.
- Know your risk factors for stroke (checklist).

## StrokeLine

The National Stroke Foundation's StrokeLine provides information about stroke prevention, recovery and support. Our qualified health professionals are here for you when you need comprehensive information and help.

Remember, stroke is largely preventable, so contact us today to discover the changes you can make to reduce your risk of stroke.

Call our toll free service on **1800 787 653** (open business hours EST across Australia, a message service is available outside these hours). If you leave a message, a health professional will return your call the next working day.

## How can you help?

Stroke is responsible for 1 in 10 deaths in Australia. We need to raise urgently needed funds to continue our work in a number of areas to reduce the incidence and burden of stroke in Australia. **Please show your support and donate today.**

Visit [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au) or call **1300 194 196**.

## About us

The National Stroke Foundation is Australia's peak body for stroke. We are a not for profit organisation that works with the public, government, health professionals, patients, carers and stroke survivors to reduce the impact of stroke on the Australian community.

Our mission is to stop stroke, save lives and end suffering.

We will achieve this by:

- Educating the public about the risk factors and signs of stroke and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Working with all stakeholders to develop and implement policy on the prevention and management of stroke.
- Encouraging the development of comprehensive and coordinated services for all stroke survivors and their families.
- Encouraging and facilitating stroke research.

Supported by:



**StrokeLine:** 1800 787 653

**Email:** [admin@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:admin@strokefoundation.com.au)

**Website:** [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)

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**strokefoundation**

Stop stroke. Save lives. End suffering.

# Know the signs of stroke



**stroke**safe  
for life

Brought to you by the National Stroke Foundation

## Did you know?

- On average in Australia there is a stroke every 10 minutes.
- One in three people die within a year of having a stroke.
- Stroke kills more women than breast cancer.
- Almost one in five people who experience a stroke are under the age of 55.
- Men are more likely to suffer a stroke at a younger age.

**Think F.A.S.T. Act FAST!**

## What is a stroke?

A stroke is not a heart attack. A stroke happens when the supply of blood to the brain is suddenly interrupted. Blood is carried to the brain by blood vessels called arteries. Blood may stop moving through an artery because the artery is blocked by a clot or plaque, or because the artery breaks or bursts.

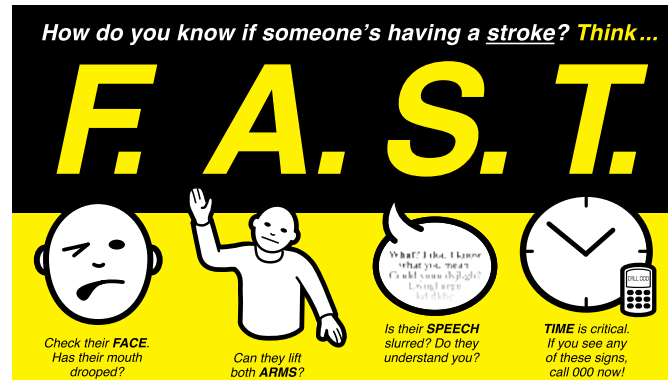
When blood stops flowing, the brain does not receive the oxygen it needs, and therefore brain cells in the area die and permanent damage may be done. Some strokes are fatal while others cause permanent or temporary disability.

**Stroke is a medical emergency and time is critical. If you see the signs of stroke call 000 immediately.**

## Recognising signs of stroke

The **FAST** test is an easy way to remember and recognise the signs of stroke. **FAST** stands for **F**ace, **A**rms, **S**peech, **T**ime to act.

Using the **FAST** test involves asking three simple questions:



Facial weakness, arm weakness and difficulty with speech are the most common signs of stroke, but are not the only signs. Other signs of stroke may include one, or a combination of:

- Weakness, numbness or paralysis – in the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.
- Difficulty speaking or understanding.
- Dizziness, loss of balance or unexplained fall.
- Loss of vision, sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes.
- Headache – usually severe and abrupt onset or a change in the pattern of headaches.
- Difficulty swallowing.

The signs of stroke may occur alone or in combination and they can last a few seconds or up to 24 hours and then disappear.

When symptoms disappear within 24 hours, this episode is a mini stroke or Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA). If you, or someone else experiences the signs of stroke, no matter how long they last, call 000 immediately.

[www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)

Getting fast treatment can be the difference between death or severe disability and a good recovery. Strokes are preventable and treatable.

For strokes caused by a blood clot in the brain there are treatments that can break up the clot to stop further damage to the brain. These must be given within three hours of the start of the stroke so it is vital to recognise the signs and call 000 (triple zero) as soon as you suspect someone may be having a stroke.

Regardless of what type of stroke or what treatment, the faster someone gets treatment the better.

## What to do while waiting for an ambulance

After calling 000 (triple zero) and waiting for the ambulance to arrive, stay with the person and if they are conscious lay them down on their side with their head supported.

It is important that you do not give them anything to eat or drink as they may have problems swallowing.

## Kim's story



It was a Sunday afternoon when mother of two, Kim Durose, 43, found that her arm had “stopped working”. When she tried to tell her husband Matt, the words would not come out properly.

But Matt had heard the National Stroke Foundation's FAST advertisement on the

radio and remembered that two symptoms were arm weakness and speech difficulties – the A and S of FAST.

Matt knew what to do – he immediately dialled 000. An ambulance took Kim to a near by hospital where she was treated with a clot-busting drug tPA.

“I realise how lucky I was. The scans showed that I had a significant clot in my brain and I now know that there is only a three hour window to get the tPA treatment.”

In just 24 hours Kim's symptoms cleared completely and she is now enjoying life as a busy mum.