

STROKE

Overview

A stroke is a medical emergency caused by an interruption of blood flow to part of the brain. When this happens, the brain's cells are deprived of oxygen and nutrients. These cells begin to die quickly. A stroke can cause severe complications in the brain and body. It can be fatal.

Ischemic Stroke

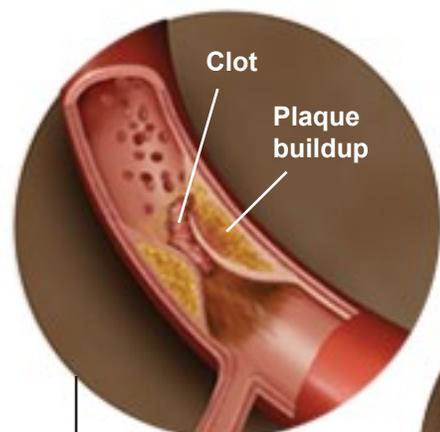
A stroke can result from a blockage in an artery in the brain. This kind of stroke is called an ischemic stroke. An ischemic stroke can be caused by a gradual buildup of plaque in an artery. It can also be caused by a clot that travels from somewhere else in the body and lodges within an artery in the brain.

Hemorrhagic Stroke

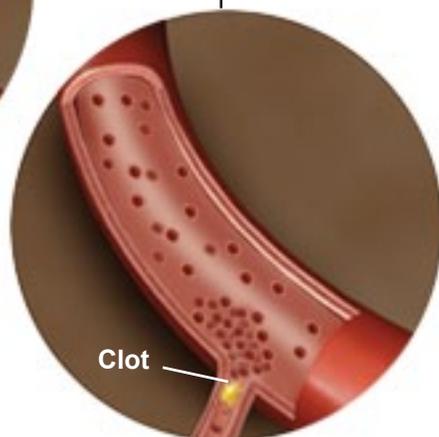
A less common type of stroke, called a hemorrhagic stroke, is caused by a burst blood vessel that leaks blood in the brain or in the space just outside the brain.

Risk Factors

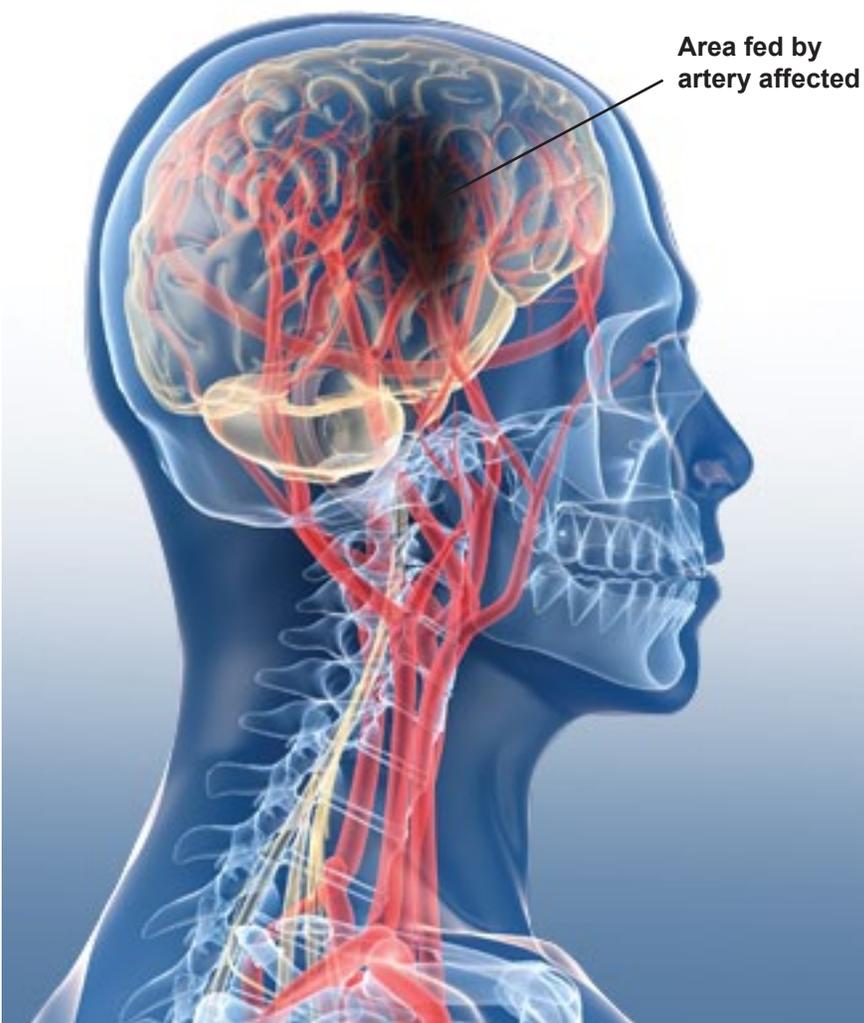
Stroke is associated with a variety of risk factors. People age 55 and older are at an increased risk for stroke. The risk is also higher for people who have a family history of the disease, and for people who have an African-American ethnicity. Other risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease. Stroke is more common in people who have diabetes, in people who are overweight and in people who have obstructive sleep apnea. Smoking, heavy alcohol use, and the use of illegal drugs raise a person's risk for stroke. Birth control or hormone medications can also raise a person's risk.



**THROMBOTIC
ISCHEMIC
STROKE**



**EMBOLIC
ISCHEMIC
STROKE**



STROKE

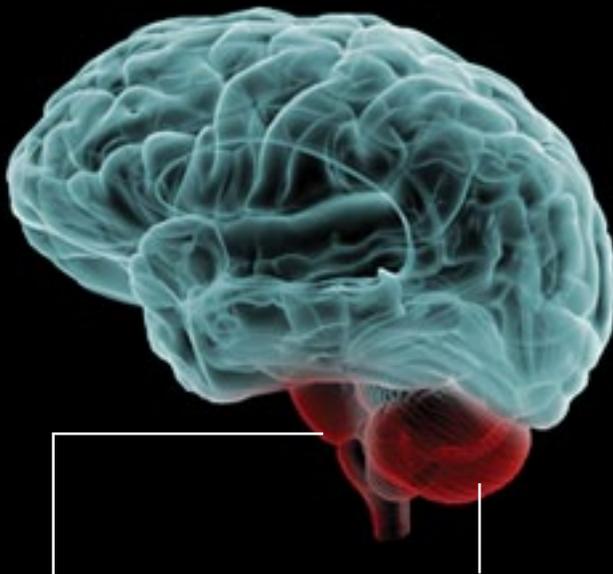
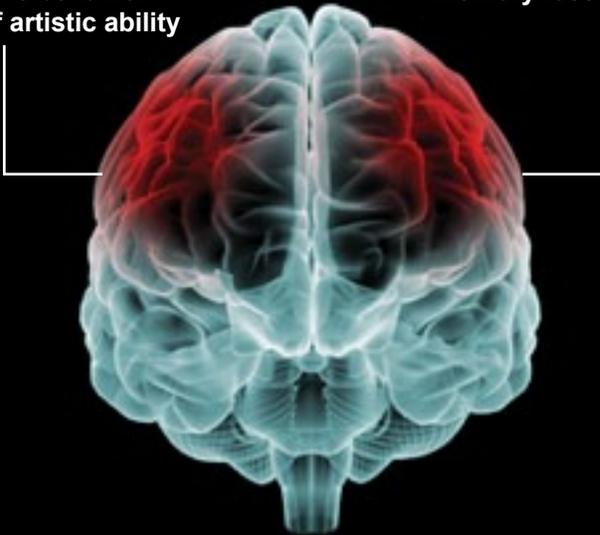
EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN

RIGHT HEMISPHERE

- Paralysis on left side
- Left side neglect
- Memory loss
- Spatial problems
- Impulsive behavior
- Loss of artistic ability

LEFT HEMISPHERE

- Paralysis on right side
- Loss of speech
- Mood swings
- Difficulty with math
- Memory loss



BRAIN STEM

- Visual problems
- Swallowing difficulty
- Breathing difficulty

CEREBELLUM

- Coordination problems
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abnormal reflexes

Symptoms

Symptoms of stroke may include problems with coordination, confusion, and problems with speaking or understanding words. A person who is having a stroke may experience a headache, and often it will come on suddenly. The person may experience weakness, numbness or paralysis of one side of the face or body. The person may have blurry vision and nausea. It is important for a person experiencing any of these symptoms to seek immediate medical treatment.

Treatment

Treatment for stroke depends on the patient and on the type of stroke. A stroke caused by a blockage may be treated with medications to thin the blood or break up the clot. A physician may use a catheter to remove a clot or to place a stent in the narrowed portion of the artery to restore blood flow. A stroke caused by a hemorrhage may be treated with medications to reduce bleeding, and surgical procedures to repair or block off the leaking artery.

Surviving Stroke

Recognizing the symptoms of stroke and getting immediate medical care are the keys to surviving a stroke. But even with immediate medical attention, many stroke survivors experience loss of movement, speech, and thought processes. A person who has had a stroke may experience emotional and behavioral changes, memory loss, and sensations of numbness or pain in parts of the body. These complications can be temporary or permanent. Therapy is an important part of stroke recovery.