



Stroke

What is a stroke?

A stroke is a sudden interruption in the blood supply to the brain. Most strokes are caused by an abrupt blockage of arteries leading to the brain (ischemic stroke). Other strokes are caused by bleeding into brain tissue when a blood vessel bursts (hemorrhagic stroke). Because stroke occurs rapidly and requires immediate treatment, a stroke is also called a brain attack. When the symptoms of a stroke last only a short time (less than an hour), this is called a transient ischemic attack (TIA) or mini-stroke.

The facts:

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death among Georgians in 1996, accounting for more than 4,200 deaths. Stroke is also a major cause of hospitalization and disability.
- The southeastern United States has been called the stroke belt due to its extremely high stroke mortality rates. Georgia has one of the highest rates, with 18.2% of the state's deaths caused by stroke in 1997.
- Every 53 seconds, someone in America has a stroke. About 600,000 Americans will have a stroke this year, and 160,000 of them will die.
- In Georgia, stroke death rates are about 50 percent higher for blacks than whites. This difference is seen in both males and females.
- The total cost of stroke to the United States is estimated to be about \$43 billion per year.

Common warning signs of stroke

- Sudden weakness/numbness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Reduce YOUR risk of stroke

- Quit smoking.
- Reduce your dietary intake of saturated fats and cholesterol.
- Increase amount of physical activity.
- Moderate any use of alcohol.
- Avoid illegal drug use.

Sources:

- [Internet Stroke Center](#)
- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#). "Stroke: Hope Through Research," 1999.
- Rowe AK, Powell, KE, and Hall V. The 1999 Georgia State of the Heart Report. Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Cardiovascular Health Section, and the American Heart Association, 1999.
- [American Stroke Association](#)
- American Heart Association. "Women and Cardiovascular Diseases: Biostatistical Fact Sheet," 1997.
- National Stroke Association. "The Stroke/Brain Attack Reporter's Handbook," 1997.



This information is being provided as a source of education and information and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The OWH recommends consultation with your doctor or healthcare professional.