

RISK FACTORS

for a stroke

Stroke prevention is still the best medicine. The most important treatable conditions linked to stroke are:

- **High blood pressure.** *Treat it.* Eat a balanced diet, maintain a healthy weight, and exercise to reduce blood pressure. Drugs are also available.
- **Cigarette smoking.** *Quit.* Medical help is available to help quit.
- **Heart disease.** *Manage it.* Your doctor can treat your heart disease and may prescribe medication to help prevent the formation of clots. If you are over 50, NINDS scientists believe you and your doctor should make a decision about aspirin therapy.
- **Diabetes.** *Control it.* Treatment can delay complications that increase the risk of stroke.
- **Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs).** *Seek help.* TIAs are small strokes that last only for a few minutes or hours. They should never be ignored and can be treated with drugs or surgery.

WARNING

If you see or have one or more of these symptoms, don't wait, call 911 right away!

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- 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.

Even if the symptoms last only a few moments and then disappear, they may be signs of a serious condition that won't go away without medical help.

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