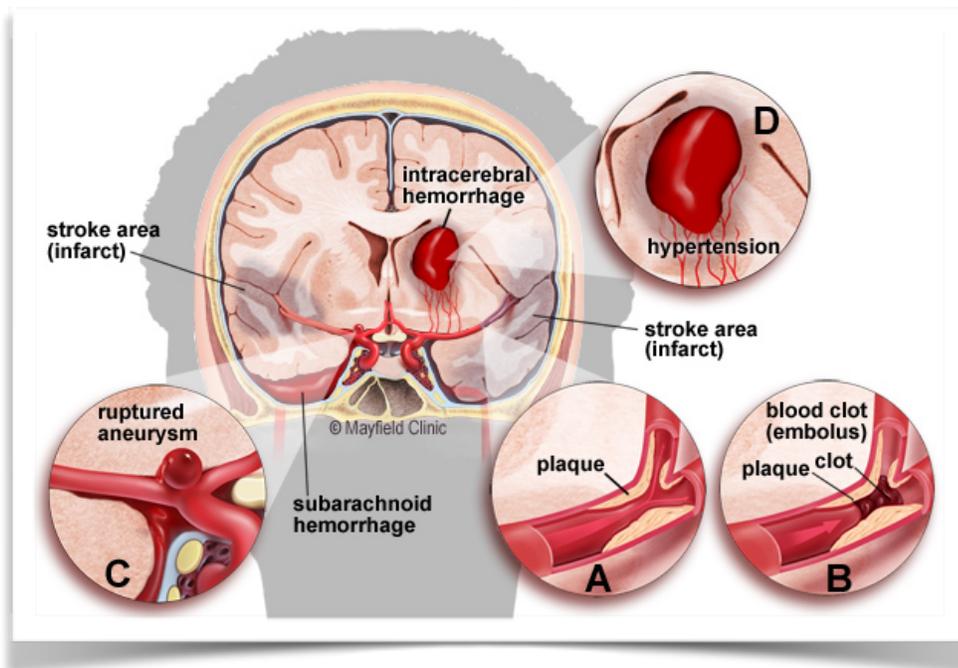


## What is a Stroke?

A stroke is a brain attack and a critical medical emergency. A stroke is an interruption of the blood supply to any part of the brain. If blood flow is halted to any area of the brain, within minutes the brain cells can die and the ability to control that area of the brain are lost either temporary or long term. Depending on the area affected, a person may have problems speaking, walking, seeing, or thinking. A stroke may result in permanent brain damage or death. There are two kinds of stroke.



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Types of stroke include: A) ischemic stroke due to build-up of atherosclerotic plaques, B) embolic stroke from blood clots that stick to plaques and break off, C) hemorrhagic stroke from bleeding into the subarachnoid space, and D) intracerebral hemorrhage from tiny vessel ruptures due to hypertension.

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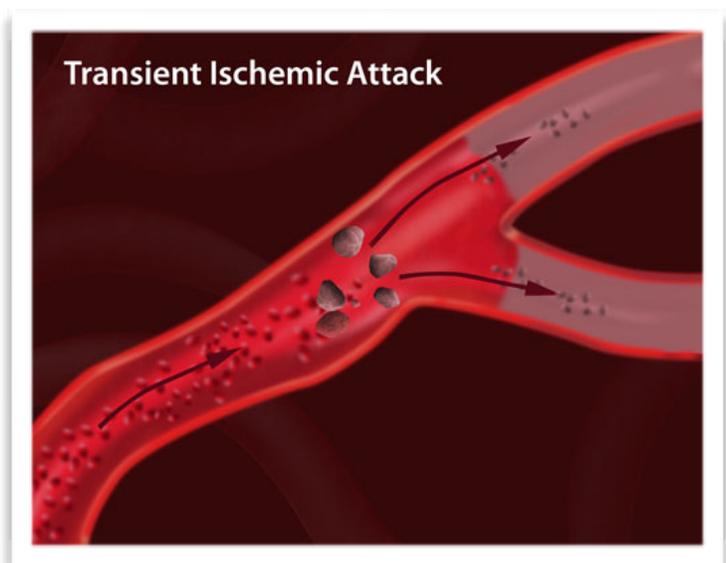
The more common kind known as ischemic, is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel in the brain. In atherosclerosis, cholesterol plaques are deposited within the walls of the arteries, narrowing the inside diameter of the artery. Clot build-up usually occurs in large blood vessels of the neck and base of the brain.

The other kind, called hemorrhagic stroke, is caused by a blood vessel that breaks and bleeds into the brain. This is called a subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH). It can be caused by a ruptured aneurysm. Bleeding within the brain tissue itself is known as an intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH) and is primarily caused by hypertension.

Embolic stroke is caused when a clot breaks off from the artery wall it becomes an embolus, which can travel farther down the bloodstream to block a smaller artery. Emboli usually come from the heart, where different diseases cause clot formation.

"Mini-strokes" or transient ischemic attacks (TIAs), occur when the blood supply to the brain is briefly interrupted.

Although TIAs are not full-blown strokes, they greatly increase the risk of having a stroke. If you have a TIA, it's important for your doctor to find the cause so you can take steps to prevent a stroke.



## **Outlook**

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and the leading cause of disability among adults in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . Many factors can raise your risk of having a stroke. Talk with your doctor about how you can control these risk factors and help prevent a stroke.

If you have a stroke, prompt treatment can reduce damage to your brain and help you avoid lasting disabilities. Prompt treatment also may help prevent another stroke.