

STROKE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

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Description

What is stroke?

Stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of blood flow to the brain as a result of a blood clot (ischemic stroke), or by the rupture of a blood vessel in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke).

The interruption of blood flow to the brain or the rupture of blood vessels causes brain cells (neurons) in the affected area to die.

Stroke is a medical emergency that needs to be diagnosed and treated quickly. The cause of stroke is similar to that of a heart attack; it occurs when blood stops flowing to the heart or brain.

In Québec, around 200,000 people a year have a stroke. It is estimated that 130,000 people who have had a stroke experience physical and psychological effects. The impacts on the quality of life of these individuals and their loved ones can be profound and sometimes dramatic.

A brain artery may sometimes be blocked temporarily; in this case, recovery occurs naturally and there are no long-term effects. This is called transient ischemic attack (TIA) or mini stroke. The symptoms are the same as for stroke, but usually last less than an hour. A TIA should be taken seriously since it can be followed by a more serious stroke within 48 hours. You should see a doctor right away.

Sources : Statistics from the MSSS Website accessed in February 2018, updated in January 2018.

Symptoms

It's important to know the signs of stroke and [to call 9-1-1](#) right away if you witness these signs or think you are having a stroke.

Strokes can have various effects, but about 1 in 10 people recovers fully. More than half of people experience ongoing effects.

Protection and prevention

- Healthy lifestyle habits
- Sport and healthy eating
- Quitting smoking

Risk factors

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Atrial fibrillation

Help and Resources

- [Programme La vie après un AVC](#), Fondation des maladies du cœur
- [Accident vasculaire cérébral \(AVC\)](#), Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS)
- [Accident vasculaire cérébral](#), Passeport santé
- [What is a stroke? - Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](#)