Symptoms of Stroke

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En Español (Spanish Version)

Symptoms of stroke are due to interruption of the blood supply to part of your brain. They occur suddenly and differ depending on the part of the brain affected. Multiple symptoms generally arise together because the artery that is blocked may supply a large enough area of the brain to include multiple functions. Anything your brain does may be affected.

Blood Supply and Lack of Blood Supply to the Brain

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The most common symptoms include:

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg (usually occurring on one side of the body)
- Sudden onset of confusion, difficulty swallowing, difficulty speaking or understanding what others are saying
- Blurry, dimming, or no vision in one or both eyes
- Dizziness, falling, or loss of balance
- Severe or unusual headache

Call for emergency medical help immediately. Brain tissue dies quickly when deprived of oxygen. But, there is a brief window of opportunity to reverse some of the damage.

Strokes are classified according to their course in time:

- A completed stroke reaches its maximum extent immediately or over the course of a few hours.
- A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is a temporary loss of blood supply to the brain that resolves on its own, within 24 hours. It serves as a warning that a more severe stroke is likely.
- A stroke in progress is one that continues to worsen over time, possibly even days.
- Multiple small strokes may accumulate over time, from days to years, to produce an effect similar to one big stroke.

After a stroke, it is common to have emotional disturbances, as well as physical limitations. Keep these in mind, since they too may need treatment.

REFERENCES: