

# THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK

In the Clinic  
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## What is a transient ischemic attack (TIA)?

- TIA occurs when blood flow to the brain is temporarily blocked. Even a brief blockage stops the brain from working normally and can cause trouble with the body function controlled by that part of the brain.
- Most TIAs last only a few minutes, but can last up to 24 hours.
- TIA is sometimes referred to as a "mini stroke" or "warning stroke." TIAs are different from strokes because a stroke damages the brain permanently and leaves a lasting loss of body function.

## Who gets TIA?

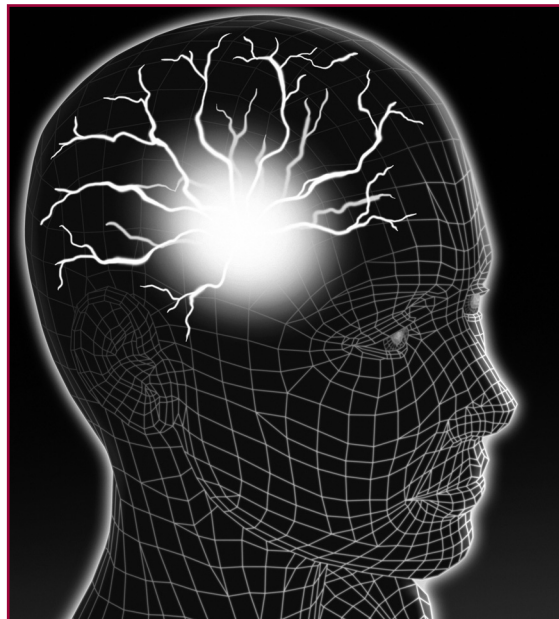
Things that increase the chances of TIA include:

- Age older than 50 years
- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy cholesterol levels
- Smoking
- Lack of exercise
- Abnormal heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation
- Personal or family history of cardiovascular disease
- Medical conditions that increase blood clotting or blood vessel inflammation.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms depend on where in the brain TIA occurs, but they usually occur suddenly, last a short time, and can include:

- Weakness, tingling, or numbness on one side
- Changes in vision
- Trouble speaking or understanding words
- Trouble walking or clumsiness.



## Does having a TIA increase the risk for stroke?

People who have had a TIA are at high risk for having a stroke, especially during the first 48 hours after the TIA. Certain factors, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, older age, and a TIA that lasts longer than 60 minutes, increase the risk for stroke.

## What should you do if you think you had a TIA?

If you have any sudden symptoms as noted above, seek medical care immediately. Even if the symptoms have gone away, it is still important to seek medical care. You may need treatment, such as drugs to prevent another TIA or to prevent a stroke.

## For More Information

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/transientischemicattack.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/transientischemicattack.html)  
Information on TIA from the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus.

[www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/stroke\\_bookmark.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/stroke_bookmark.htm)  
Information on stroke risk factors and symptoms from the National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

[www.americanheart.org/downloadable/heart/1196965757160AnticoagandAntiplat.pdf](http://www.americanheart.org/downloadable/heart/1196965757160AnticoagandAntiplat.pdf)

A patient handout from the American Heart Association about anticoagulants and antiplatelet drugs that are sometimes prescribed after TIA.

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