

## Stroke Patient Helpful FAQs

**What is A Stroke:** Your brain cells need a constant supply of blood, oxygen, and nutrients to survive! **A stroke occurs when a blood vessel gets blocked or bursts. This stops the blood, oxygen, and nutrients from going to the brain**

**Ischemic Stroke:** a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain is *blocked*.

**About 87% of all strokes are ischemic.**

**Thrombotic:** These are caused by a blood clot that develops in the blood vessels inside the brain.

- This type of stroke is usually seen in older persons, especially those with high cholesterol and atherosclerosis (a buildup of fat and lipids inside the walls of blood vessels) or diabetes.

**Embolic:** These are caused by a blood clot or plaque debris that develops elsewhere in the body and then travels to one of the blood vessels in the brain through the bloodstream.

- About 15% of embolic strokes occur in people with atrial fibrillation, a type of abnormal heart rhythm in which the upper chambers of the heart do not beat effectively.

**Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA):** A Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) is caused by a temporary blockage. TIAs may last for a few minutes or up to 24 hours, and are *often a warning sign that a stroke may occur*. Although usually mild and transient, the symptoms caused by a TIA are similar to those caused by a stroke.

- 15% of people will have a stroke within 1 year after a TIA

**Hemorrhagic Stroke:** a blood vessel in the brain *breaks open and bleeds* into or around the brain.

**About 13% of strokes are hemorrhagic**

**Intracerebral Hemorrhage:** when a blood vessel in the brain breaks open and blood leaks into the brain tissue nearby. The pressure on the brain can harm brain cells and cause swelling in the brain tissue.

- Intracerebral hemorrhage is an emergency and is associated with a high mortality rate. It is VERY important to get medical attention right away!
- Patients with cerebellar hemorrhage who are deteriorating neurologically or who have brainstem compression and/or hydrocephalus from ventricular obstruction should undergo surgical removal of the hemorrhage as soon as possible.
- For most patients with supratentorial ICH (**the upper part of the brain**) the usefulness of surgery is not well established

**Subarachnoid Hemorrhage (caused by aneurysm rupture):** SAH is bleeding into the spinal fluid filled space on the outside of the brain called the subarachnoid space. Non-traumatic SAH is most commonly caused by an abnormal blood vessel that bursts, such as a *cerebral aneurysm*.

**What is a cerebral (brain) aneurysm?** Balloon-like bulge or weak spot of an artery wall that can burst, which releases blood into the subarachnoid space around the brain.

**Not considered a stroke:** Traumatic brain hemorrhages or hemorrhages from brain tumors. Think of "Traumas and Tumors don't count"