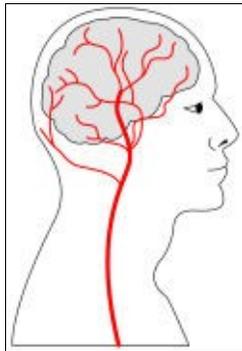


## WHAT IS A STROKE?



### A STROKE IS A BRAIN ATTACK

For your brain to function, it needs a constant blood supply, which provides vital nutrients and oxygen to the brain cells. A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off and brain cells are damaged or die. **Strokes are sudden and have an immediate effect.**

## Recognise stroke symptoms **FAST**

You can recognise a stroke using the **FAST** test

**F**ACIAL weakness: Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

**A**RM weakness: Can the person raise both arms?

**S**PEECH problems: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

**T**IME to call 511.

**If a person fails any one of these tests, get help immediately by dialing 511.**

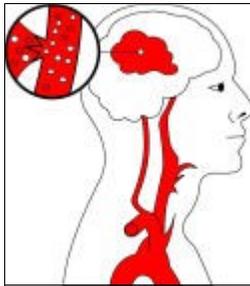
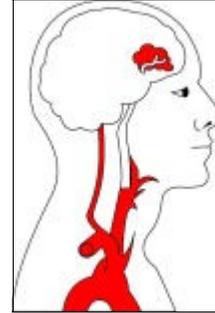
A speedy response can help reduce the damage to a person's brain and improve their chances of a full recovery. A delay in getting help can result in death or long-term disabilities.

## TYPES OF STROKES

There are two main types of stroke.

**Ischaemic strokes** happen when something blocks an artery that carries blood to the brain. There are several possible causes:

- a blood clot forms in a main artery to the brain
- a blood clot, air bubble or fat globule forms in a blood vessel and is carried to the brain
- there is a blockage in the tiny bloody vessels deep inside the brain.



**Haemorrhagic strokes** happen when a blood vessel bursts and bleeds into the brain (a haemorrhage).

The haemorrhage may be due to:

- a vessel bursting within the brain itself, or
- a blood vessel on the surface of the brain bleeding into the area between the brain and the skull.

### Temporary symptoms may indicate a mini-stroke

Sometimes the blockage in the blood supply to the brain is temporary, and a person will have the symptoms of a stroke for a short time.

This is called a **transient ischaemic attack (TIA)** or mini stroke. A TIA is a sign that part of the brain is not getting enough blood, and there is a risk of a more serious stroke in future. As with major strokes, you must seek medical attention immediately.

*Resources: The Stroke Association - UK*

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados  
#3 Railway View, Ladymeade Gardens, Jemmotts Lane, St Michael. BB11156.  
Tel: (246) 437-3312. Fax: (246) 430-9898  
Email: [enquiries@hsfbarbados.org](mailto:enquiries@hsfbarbados.org). Website: [www.hsfbarbados.org](http://www.hsfbarbados.org)