

Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)

Cerebrovascular disease, also known as stroke, is an interruption of the blood supply to any part of the brain. A stroke is sometimes called a “brain attack.”

Causes

- Blocked blood vessel in the brain due to blood clot that forms around the buildup of fatty deposits on the inner walls of blood vessels or blockage due to a travelling particle or debris in the blood stream originating from elsewhere (ischemic stroke)
- Accumulation of blood anywhere within the skull due to bursting or rupture of blood vessels (hemorrhagic stroke)

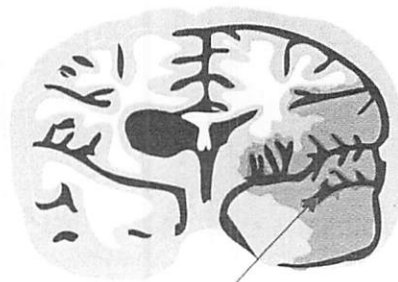
Risk Factors

- Diabetes
- Family history of stroke
- Heart disease/hypertension
- High cholesterol
- Increasing age
- Alcohol intake
- Smoking
- Unhealthy diet

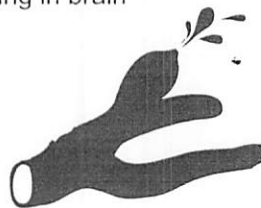
Signs and Symptoms

- Numbness or sudden weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion/difficulty speaking or understanding speech

- Feeling light-headed/dizziness/fainting/unconsciousness
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Difficulty walking/loss of balance or coordination
- Difficulty seeing with one or both eyes
- Severe headache with no known cause



Blood vessel bursting in brain



Treatment/Prevention

Treatment for cerebrovascular disease depends on the individual, the nature of the disease, and the severity of the disease.

- Bring immediately the patient suspected of suffering from stroke to an emergency room of a health facility for treatment to be administered right away. Early diagnosis and early treatment will mean better neurological outcome for the patient.
- A thorough physical and neurological evaluation will be done by emergency room physicians or a team of neurologists and/or neurosurgeons.
- A CT scan of the brain is recommended for better management of the patient’s condition.
- Specialized care for acute stroke patients should be continued from the emergency room to the ward.
- Physical therapy and speech therapy are



adjunctive treatments to regain patient's function prior to stroke.

Prevention

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Engage in regular physical activity.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Control blood pressure.
- Control blood sugar.
- Quit smoking.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Avoid chronic stress or anger.

References

- Weiss, Thomas C. (2009). Cerebrovascular Disease - Facts, Diagnosis, and Treatment. Retrieved from <http://www.disabled-world.com/health/neurology/stroke/cerebrovascular-disease.php>
- World Health Organization Media Centre (2012). Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs317/en/index.html>

Image from <http://www.heartzine.com/heart-disease/Stroke.html>