

Stroke Discharge Education

For patients who have had a stroke or are at risk for stroke

Take this handout home with you. It has important phone numbers, websites and information about next steps and preventing stroke. Please share this information with your primary care doctor, family and friends.

What is a stroke?

Stroke is the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States and the number one cause of serious long-term disability.

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is blocked, or a blood vessel breaks causing brain cells to die. Brain cells do not regenerate, and brain death can cause symptoms like:

- Inability to move one side of the body,
- Numbness on one side of the body
- Imbalance, speech or visual problems.

People who have had one stroke, are at risk of having another stroke. You can take medications and make lifestyle changes that can help prevent additional strokes.

What are the Warning Signs of Stroke?

Call 911 right away if you or someone you know has any of the following symptoms of Stroke:

- **B**alance is off, difficulty walking or vertigo
 - **E**yesight changes or trouble seeing (loss of vision or double vision)
 - **F**ace is uneven (facial drooping, drooling or facial numbness)
 - **A**rm or Leg weakness on one side
 - **S**peech is difficult (slurred or confused speech)
 - **T**ime is very important - **DO NOT DELAY - CALL 911**
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- Not all the warning signs occur in every stroke.
 - Strokes may be associated with a sudden, severe headache.
 - Don't ignore signs of stroke, even if they go away!
 - Stroke symptoms are typically sudden but may worsen or fluctuate over days.
 - Check the time.
 - When did the first warning sign or symptom start?
 - Clot busting medications that may restore blood flow to the brain and reduce long-term disability can be given only within 3-4 hours of symptoms.
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- **IF YOU THINK YOU ARE HAVING A STROKE DO NOT DELAY CALL 911**

What type of stroke did I have?

- ☐ **Ischemic stroke** is caused by a blockage (embolism) or narrowing (stenosis) of blood vessel (artery) that brings oxygen and nutrients to the brain. The brain tissue that no longer receives its blood supply can die within a few minutes unless the blood supply is restored.
- ☐ **Transient Ischemic attack (TIA)** is a type of brief ischemic stroke where blood flow is blocked or decreased temporally and causes symptoms of a stroke that resolve without treatment or permanent damage to the brain. A TIA is often a warning sign and an opportunity to prevent a larger stroke.
- ☐ **Hemorrhagic Stroke** is a type of stroke where the blood vessels in the brain break and there is bleeding into the brain.

What are my next steps?

- ☐ **Follow up with your primary care doctor within 1 week from discharge**
 - ☐ **My appointment is with:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____
- ☐ Follow-up with a neurologist within 2 weeks from discharge
- ☐ Follow-up with a cardiologist within 2 weeks from discharge
- ☐ Follow-up with a vascular doctor within 2 weeks from discharge
- ☐ Follow-up with therapy services
 - ☐ Physical therapy
 - ☐ Occupational therapy
 - ☐ Speech therapy
- ☐ Follow-up for additional testing/imaging (zio, mri, echo etc)
 - ☐ _____
 - ☐ _____

If you live in the local area and plan to follow up with Tahoe Forest providers, the above referrals will be placed prior to discharge and we will contact you to make an appointment with the specialist.

If you live outside of the local area, please see your primary care doctor to help coordinate follow-up appointments, therapy and additional testing.

Important Phone Numbers:

To schedule or change appointments call the **Tahoe Forest Access Center at (530) 582 - 6205**

If you are having difficulty scheduling appointments or testing in the Tahoe Forest Health System, call the **Tahoe Forest Stroke Care Coordinator at (530) 550 – 6715** (In office Wed, Thur, & Fri).

What are my personal risk factors for stroke and how can I decrease my risk?

- ☐ **High blood pressure**
 - Start a healthy diet and daily exercise
 - Take medications to lower your blood pressure
 - Follow up with your primary care doctor regularly to ensure blood pressure goals
- ☐ **High Cholesterol**
 - Start a healthy diet and daily exercise as well
 - Take medications to lower your cholesterol
 - Follow up with your primary care doctor regularly to ensure cholesterol goals
- ☐ **Diabetes**
 - Start a healthy diet and daily exercise
 - Take medications to control your blood sugar
 - Follow up with your primary care doctor regularly to ensure blood sugar goals
- ☐ **Heart problems**
 - Follow up with cardiologist to ensure all heart problems are optimized
- ☐ **Irregular Heartbeat (Atrial fibrillation or Atrial Flutter)**
 - Follow up with cardiologist for treatment of atrial fibrillation/flutter
 - Take anticoagulant medications to lower your risk of atrial fibrillation causing stroke
- ☐ **Clotting disorder**
 - Take anticoagulant medications to lower your risk of clots causing stroke
- ☐ **Overweight or lack of exercise**
 - Start a healthy diet and daily exercise
 - Follow up with your primary care doctor regularly to ensure weight goals
- ☐ **Heavy alcohol use, illegal drugs, nicotine Products**
 - Limit or stop alcohol use
 - Quit smoking or using illegal drugs
 - Your primary care doctor can help with medications and programs to help cut back or stop using alcohol, illegal drugs or nicotine.
- ☐ **Other**
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NOTES:

Where can I learn more about strokes at get support?



- **Tahoe Forest Stroke Website**
 - Information about stroke, risk modification and lifestyle diet education
 - <https://www.tfhd.com/conditions/stroke/> or scan the QR code
- **The Wise Mind Series – A Brain Health Education Series**
 - First Wednesday each month from 4:00-5:30p
 - Tahoe Forest Hospital Eskridge Conference Room
 - Contact (530) 587-3769 for more information
- **FREED Brain Injury Support Group**
 - 1st Thursday of every month from 11-12:30p
 - 10075 Levon Ave, Truckee CA 96161
 - Coordinator: Beverly Morrow (530) 477-3333
 - Website: www.FREED.org
- **National resources for stroke survivors and their families**
 - **Stroke Family Warm Line: 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653)**
 - American Stroke Association team member can provide support and information
 - 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. CT Monday through Friday
 - American Stroke Association
 - www.strokeassociation.org
 - National Stroke Association
 - www.stroke.org
 - Penumbra
 - <https://www.penumbrainc.com/patients/>
- **Resources for lifestyle modification**
 - AHA Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations
 - <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/aha-diet-and-lifestyle-recommendations>
 - CDC Stop Smoking
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/index.html>
 - CDC Get Started with Drinking Less
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/drink-less-be-your-best/getting-started-with-drinking-less/index.html>

STROKE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



**CALL THE CHARGE NURSE OR TRIAGE NURSE ASAP
TIME IS BRAIN**

