

Diet - You should aim for at least **five portions of fruits and vegetables each day**. A diet high in fatty foods causes **cholesterol** to build up in the blood and arteries to narrow. Too much **salt** can lead to high blood pressure.

Watch your weight - Being overweight is a risk factor for high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, all of which increase your risk of a TIA / stroke.

Drink sensibly - Drinking too much alcohol raises blood pressure. Binge drinking (drinking more than six units in six hours) is particularly dangerous as it can cause blood pressure to soar.

Take more exercise - Regular exercise can reduce your risk by lowering blood pressure and assisting with weight management.

Get your blood pressure checked - High blood pressure causes the arteries to narrow and puts extra strain on the blood vessels.

Take prescribed medication - Make sure other medical conditions are controlled.

You **MUST NOT** drive for one month and see your GP for further advice before returning to drive.

For further advice
Contact our Stroke Nurse on:
0151 290 4275

This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages/formats on request

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Stroke Services

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Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)

Patient information leaflet

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What is a TIA (Mini-stroke)?

A **Transient Ischaemic Attack** (TIA) is a set of symptoms that lasts a short time and occurs because of a temporary lack of blood to part of the brain. It is sometimes called a 'mini stroke'. However, unlike a stroke, the symptoms are temporary and soon go. (The word '**Ischaemic**' means a reduced supply of blood and oxygen to a part of the body).

What causes TIA?

In most cases, a TIA is caused by a tiny blood clot that becomes stuck in a small blood vessel (artery) in the brain. This blocks the blood flow and a part of the brain is starved of oxygen. The affected part of the brain is without oxygen for just a few minutes and soon recovers. This is because the blood clot either breaks up quickly or, nearby blood vessels are able to compensate.

Recognizing a TIA (Mini-stroke)

TIA symptoms, which usually occur **suddenly**, are similar to those of stroke but do not last as long. By definition, a TIA resolves within 24 hours, but most **TIA symptoms resolve within a few minutes**.

Symptoms can include:

- numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- confusion or difficulty in talking or understanding speech
- trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- difficulty with walking, dizziness or loss of balance and coordination.

Because there is no way to tell whether symptoms are from a TIA or an acute stroke, you should assume that all stroke-like symptoms signal an **emergency** and should not wait to see if they go away.

Why is a TIA important?

A TIA is a sign that part of the brain is not getting enough blood and that there is a risk of a more serious stroke in the future. This risk is highest in the first few days and weeks after a TIA. If your symptoms are due to TIA it is likely that you will be referred to see **a specialist at an Outpatients' Clinic**. In some cases **admission to hospital** will be appropriate.

A TIA may offer an opportunity to find a cause and prevent permanent disability that results because of a stroke. Many strokes can be prevented by heeding the **warning signs** of TIAs. If you have these symptoms it is important to seek medical advice **immediately**.

**NEVER IGNORE A TIA (mini-stroke)
IT'S A WARNING SIGN!**

What treatment is required?

Treatment will be aimed at reducing the risk of stroke. These include tablets to thin the blood, tablets to lower cholesterol and tablets to lower blood pressure. In a small number of patients with TIA, investigations show that the blood vessels which supply blood to the brain are significantly narrowed. In this case an operation may be beneficial.

How can I reduce my risk of TIA/Stroke?

There are several things you can do to help reduce your risks:

Give up smoking - Smoking causes the arteries to become narrowed and makes the blood more likely to clot.

**Stopping smoking
can cut your risk of TIA/stroke by half**