



General Information

An ischemic stroke occurs when a blockage or a rupture of a blood vessel leading to the brain disrupts the blood supply to your brain. Once you have had a stroke, you are at greater risk to have another one. It is very important that you follow up with your doctor and follow the discharge instructions. Refer to your *Discharge Instructions Sheet* for your doctor's name and phone number to make an appointment. Keep all follow up appointments. While all strokes cannot be prevented, below are some key points that may help decrease your risk.

• Medications Prescribed by the Physician

Take medications as prescribed. Certain medications have been proven to improve blood flow, such as:

1. **Antiplatelet Medications** help prevent clots from forming.
Ex: Aspirin, Clopidogrel (Plavix), extended release Dipyridamole (Aggrenox)
2. **Anticoagulant Medications** help prevent clots from forming if you have heart conditions such as irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation or atrial flutter) or heart valve replacement.
Ex: Coumadin (Warfarin), Heparin
3. **Statins** help reduce cholesterol levels, future strokes and the risk of other vascular events, such as heart attacks.
Ex: Simvastatin (Zocor)

• High Blood Pressure

Have your blood pressure checked and treated if it is high. It is the most important risk factor for stroke that physician's instructions regarding medications and diet.

• High Blood Cholesterol

High cholesterol causes plaque buildup or fat in your blood vessels, which increases your risk of stroke. Follow the physician's medication/diet instructions to lower the numbers.

• Quit Smoking

For help, visit www.smokefree.gov or call your local quit hotline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

• Maintain a Healthy Weight

Speak with the physician about how to maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

• Mini Strokes (Transient Ischemic Attack, TIA)

Mini strokes cause temporary, stroke-like symptoms. If you have a mini stroke, it is important to be seen by a physician immediately.

• Diabetes

Controlling blood sugar levels helps prevent further damage to your blood vessels. Follow medication and/or diet instructions.

• Avoid Alcohol

Large amounts of alcohol can increase your blood pressure.

• Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial Fibrillation is an irregular heart rhythm that puts you at risk for blood clots that could lead to a stroke. Taking medications as ordered is important to prevent bleeding problems and help prevent/decrease clots from forming.

KNOW YOUR ZONE

Which zone are you in today?

ALL CLEAR/GOAL ZONE

Your symptoms are under control and you do not have any of the signs listed in the yellow or red zones below.

CAUTION/WARNING ZONE

Call your physician if you:

- Have side effects or concerns about your medications.
- Need help with managing risk factors for stroke prevention.
- Still have stroke symptoms. Inpatient/outpatient rehab may be needed.

EMERGENCY ZONE

Call 911 if you suddenly have any of the following:

- Weakness/numbness of the face, arm, leg or on both sides of the body
- Dimness or loss of vision in one eye or double vision
- Loss of speech, trouble talking or understanding speech
- Severe headaches
- Unexplained dizziness, difficulty with balance, unsteadiness or sudden falls, especially along with any of the previous symptoms