

TIA: Transient Ischemic Attack

What is a TIA?

A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is caused by a small clot that briefly blocks an artery. It is sometimes called a mini-stroke or warning stroke.

How do you recognize a TIA?

The TIA symptoms usually last less than an hour, and may only last a few minutes. TIAs are an important warning that a more serious stroke may occur soon. They are a medical emergency – call 9-1-1.

The word FAST provides an easy way to recognize a TIA or stroke:

Face is it drooping?
Arms can you raise both?
Speech is it slurred or jumbled?
Time to call 9-1-1 right away.

Act **FAST** because the quicker you act, the more of the person you save.

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If you think you are having a TIA or stroke, call 9-1-1. If you are not admitted to a hospital, ask when you will be seen at a stroke prevention clinic and how that is arranged.

What causes a TIA?

The most common causes of a TIA are:

- A blood clot
 - The buildup of plaque in your arteries
- Both reduce blood flow to your brain.

What are the risk factors?

Risk factors include:

- Some things that you cannot control, like age and family history.
- Many things that you can control, including medical conditions and everyday lifestyle habits.

The good news is that healthy lifestyle habits can protect your health and lower your risk of stroke. These habits will help you to keep a healthy weight, prevent or manage high blood pressure, manage stress and much more.

How can you reduce your risk?

Talk to your doctor about a stroke prevention plan.

- You should talk about treating any medical conditions that may affect your risk. This may include medication, in addition to your lifestyle habits.
- The most common conditions related to TIA are:
 - High blood pressure
 - Atrial fibrillation (Afib) – a condition involving an irregular heart rhythm
 - Diabetes
 - High cholesterol

Know the signs. Call 9-1-1 if you experience them.

Learn about the everyday choices that you can make to reduce your risk factors.

Have the big picture in mind when you make your prevention plan. What is important to you? To be able to travel? To be able to play with your grandchildren?

Everyday choices to lower your risk:

- **Be more active** – aim for 30 minutes or more of physical activity (in 10-minute bouts or more) most days of the week. Look for chances to be more active in your daily routine, such as brisk walking or taking the stairs instead of escalator.
- **Make healthy food choices** – eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Eat mostly homemade meals using whole, natural foods. Limit processed food (like canned soup, cold cuts, frozen meals).
- **Manage stress** – understand what causes your stress. Are there ways to reduce or eliminate your stressors? Do things that relax you, like listening to music. When talking to your doctor about your health, include your mental health in the discussion.

- **Quit smoking** – this is one of the best things you can do to lower your risk. Quitting is hard. Ask for help if you need it by calling 1-866-366-3667.

- **Limit the alcohol you drink**

By changing your lifestyle habits, you are reducing your risk of TIA and stroke.



What is your prevention plan?

During your doctor's appointment, note key actions here.

My risk factors	Doctor's recommendation	My plan
<i>Example: High blood pressure</i>	<i>No medications, manage through exercise and diet.</i>	<i>Walk home from work at least twice a week. Bring homemade lunch 3 times per week.</i>

Assess your risk and learn about the actions you can take – heartandstroke.ca/risk