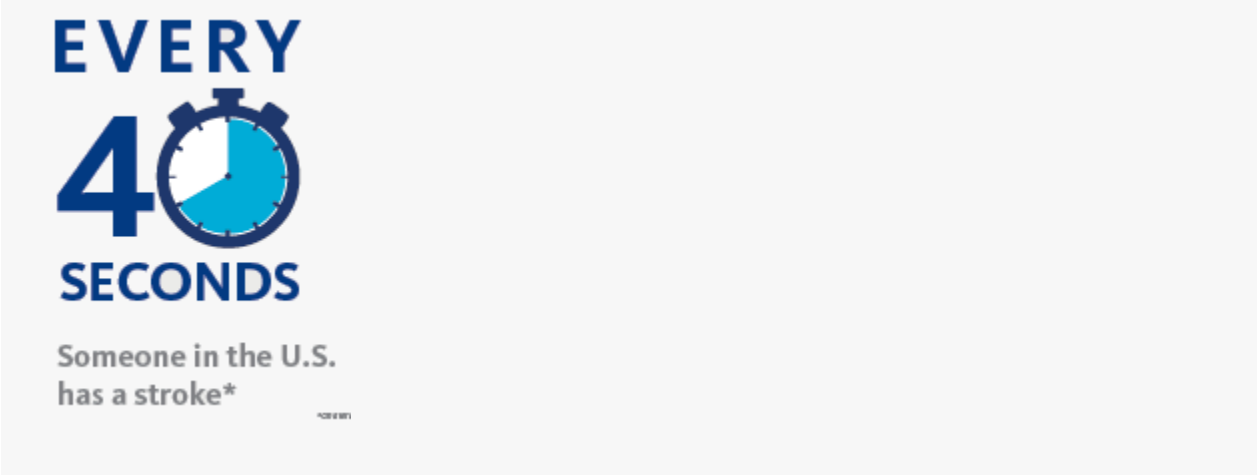
## WITH A STROKE, EVERY SECOND COUNTS

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is cut off or interrupted. It's an emergency situation requiring immediate medical attention because damage may occur to the brain that results in the loss of many mental and physical functions.

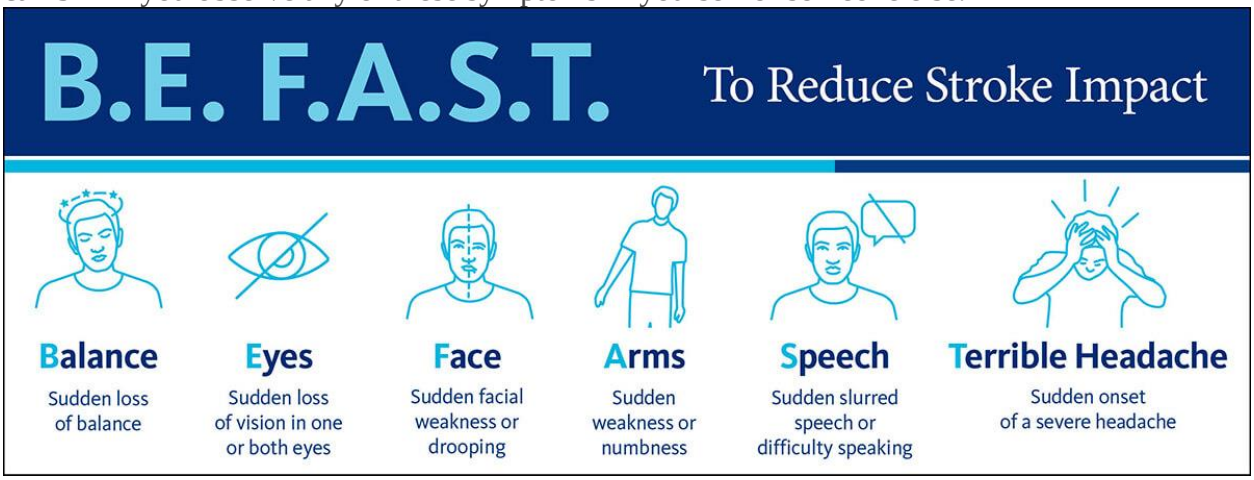
**Every second is important when you or someone you know is experiencing a stroke. If you or someone around you is experiencing a stroke, call 911 immediately.** Understanding a stroke, its signs and ways to prevent them, can possibly save a life and improve stroke. According to the Centers for Disease Control, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, killing nearly 130,000 Americans each year—that's 1 in every 20 deaths. Every year, nearly 800,000 people in the United States have a stroke, and on average, someone has a stroke every 40 seconds.

Getting fast medical treatment lowers the risk of disability or even death. That's why it's important to recognize the signs and symptoms of a stroke and to get help right away.




### Stroke Symptoms

Immediate medical attention is needed when you suspect a stroke is occurring. **B.E.F.A.S.T.** and call 911 if you observe any of these symptoms in yourself or someone else.



## Treatment and Types of Strokes

Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability, and reduces mobility in more than half of stroke survivors age 65 and over.

With immediate treatment, a stroke victim has a good chance of making a full recovery.

TIAs (transient ischemic attacks), or mini-strokes, produce similar symptoms of a stroke but last less than 24 hours, sometimes for just a few minutes. They are often warning signs that a stroke will occur, so it's extremely important to seek medical attention to prevent the onset of a stroke.

Ischemic strokes occur when blood flow to the brain is reduced, usually from blocked or narrowed arteries. This narrowing or blockage is often the result of a buildup of plaque and other fatty deposits. Approximately 85 percent of strokes are ischemic.

Hemorrhagic strokes occur when a blood vessel bursts in the brain. There are many conditions that can cause a hemorrhagic stroke including uncontrolled blood pressure and weak spots in blood vessel walls (aneurysms).

## Risk Factors for Stroke

There are a variety of risk factors associated with stroke, some that can be treated, changed, or controlled, including:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)**<br>The #1 leading cause of stroke, high blood pressure increases a person's risk for a stroke four to six times.<br><br>It has no obvious signs or symptoms and can go undetected, so track it regularly. A Silent Killer. |
|  | **Tobacco Use**<br>Smoking causes narrowing of the arteries and increases a person's risk of a stroke two to four times. |
|  | **High Cholesterol**<br>High cholesterol levels can contribute to atherosclerosis caused by plaque buildup in the arteries.<br><br>This plaque buildup decreases the amount of blood flow to the brain, which can lead to a stroke. |

Though some risk factors cannot be treated or changed, it's just as important to know them to help you and your doctor know your risk for stroke:

- Age: The likelihood of having a stroke doubles for each decade of life after age 55.
- Gender: Stroke occurs more often and kills more women than men.
- Race: African-Americans are twice as likely to have a first-ever stroke than Caucasians.

## Prevention

Many strokes can be prevented by making smart, healthy lifestyle choices. Talk with your doctor to determine what changes you can make that will reduce your risk of stroke and other medical conditions. Here are a few that can reduce the risk of stroke:

- Healthy diet: A diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in salt, cholesterol and fat may help lower your risk of a stroke by reducing plaque buildup in the arteries.
- Regular exercise: Exercising can help control your weight and lower your blood pressure, both risk factors for stroke. Try to exercise for 30 minutes a day.
- Manage weight: Both diabetes and high blood pressure, two key risk factors for stroke, can be improved by maintaining a healthy weight.
- Control cholesterol: Use diet, exercise and, if needed, medications to manage cholesterol levels.
- Don't smoke: Smoking can greatly increase your risk of a stroke or TIA. If you're a smoker, ask your doctor for help quitting.
- Limit alcohol: If you drink alcohol, limit your consumption to one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men.

Look for stroke information in the Narthex and Church Office you can take home and share with friends and family.

**Taken from baycare.org/services/neurosciences/stroke#**