

# Transient Ischemic Attack?

## Take Mini Strokes Seriously

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A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is sometimes called a little or a mini stroke. It is caused when blood flow to part of the brain is briefly interrupted.

### THIS COULD BE FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A blood clot in an artery of the brain
- A blood clot that travels to the brain from somewhere else in the body, for example, from the heart (embolism)
- An injury to blood vessels
- Narrowing of a blood vessel in the brain
- Narrowing of a blood vessel leading to the brain, for example, in the neck

### High blood pressure is the number one risk factor for TIAs and stroke. Other major risk factors are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart disease, especially with irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation)</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• High blood cholesterol</li> <li>• Family history of stroke</li> <li>• Increasing age, especially after age 55</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– African Americans and Hispanics are more likely than Caucasians to die from stroke</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Excessive use of alcohol                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– More than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 for women is considered risky</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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People with poor blood flow in their legs caused by narrowed arteries are also more likely to have a TIA or stroke.

## EMERGENCY

**A TIA is a medical emergency. Call 911, or another local emergency number right away. Do not delay! Do not ignore symptoms just because they go away. They may be warning signs of a future stroke.**

### The symptoms of a TIA:

- Begin suddenly
- Last only a short time, usually from a few minutes to 1 - 2 hours but might last up to 24 hours
- Go away completely but might occur again at a later time

### Any of the following can be symptoms of a TIA:

- Dizziness or an abnormal feeling of movement (vertigo)
- Numbness, tingling or muscle weakness, especially on one side of the body
- Change in alertness (sleepiness, less responsive, unconscious)
- Confusion or loss of memory
- Inability to recognize objects or people
- Trouble speaking or understanding others who are speaking
- Difficulty writing or reading
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of control over the bladder or bowels
- Loss of coordination and balance, clumsiness or trouble walking
- Problems with eyesight – double vision or loss of all or part of vision

TIAs do not cause lasting damage to the brain but:

If the symptoms and signs of the TIA have gone away by the time you get to the hospital this does not matter. A TIA diagnosis can be made based on your medical history. You will be admitted to hospital so that the health practitioners can try to find the cause of the TIA and get treatment started.

About 1 in 3 people who have a TIA and are not treated, eventually has a stroke with about half of these strokes happening within a year. The stroke may occur on the same day as the TIA or at a later time. Some people have only a single TIA episode and some have more than one.

After you have been evaluated and treated in hospital, it is essential to follow up with your health care provider to manage for the rest of your life any risk factors in your lifestyle such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, excess alcohol consumption, smoking and lack of exercise.

You can find further information about TIA and stroke at: <http://www.stroke.org> [www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tia/tia.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tia/tia.htm)