



# NEUROLOGY: BRAIN ATTACK

HELP YOUR BRAIN STAND UP TO AN ATTACK



# Recognising a brain stroke is the **first step** to damage control

## What is a brain stroke?

When there is a rapid loss of brain function, it is called a brain stroke or attack, or a cerebrovascular accident (CVA). This happens when there is a disturbance in the supply of blood to the brain.

A brain stroke is the leading cause of disability in adults, and of the hundreds of thousands of survivors every year, almost 30% need assistance with daily activities, 20% with ambulation, and 16% require institutional care. 88% of brain strokes are ischemic, of which 8 to 12% result in death within 30 days of the attack.

## 1

### RISK FACTORS OF A STROKE

For both primary and secondary prevention, the risks can be divided as modifiable (and hence avoidable) and non-modifiable (therefore unavoidable):

MODIFIABLE RISKS	NON-MODIFIABLE RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypertension</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Cardiac Disease</li> <li>• Atrial Fibrillation</li> <li>• TIA / Prior Stroke</li> <li>• Dyslipidemia</li> <li>• Cigarette Smoking</li> <li>• Alcohol Abuse</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Physical Inactivity</li> <li>• Carotid Stenosis</li> <li>• Sleep Apnea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Race / Ethnicity</li> <li>• Heredity</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>

## 2

### RECOGNISE A BRAIN ATTACK

There are several warning signs of a brain stroke, but the four most prominent signs, can be easily remembered using the letters **F.A.S.T.**

**F** stands for **face drooping**. Notice one side of the face. Is it numb or drooping? Is the smile uneven?

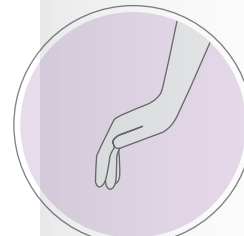
**A** stands for **arm weakness**. Is one arm weak or numb? When both arms are raised together, does one arm drift downwards?

**S** is for **speech difficulty**. Is the speech slurred, or difficult to understand? Is the person unable to speak? Can they repeat a simple sentence, like 'The ball is red' correctly?

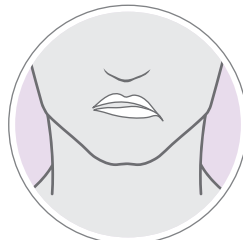
**T** stands for **time to call the hospital**.



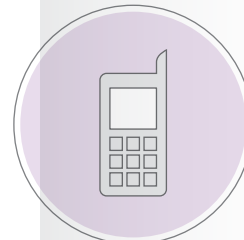
Face drooping



Arm Weakness



Speech difficulty



Time to call the hospital

Other signs and symptoms of a brain stroke include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the leg
- Sudden confusion or trouble in understanding

- Sudden difficulty seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden problem while walking, like dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no apparent cause

If you notice any of these symptoms in someone, call a doctor or get the person to the hospital immediately. Even if the symptoms go away, you must see a doctor as early as possible. Check the time you noticed the symptoms, and inform the doctor of everything you observed.

### What do you do during a brain stroke?

Recognising and attending to a brain stroke early can save a lifetime of dependency and frustration for both the patient and family.

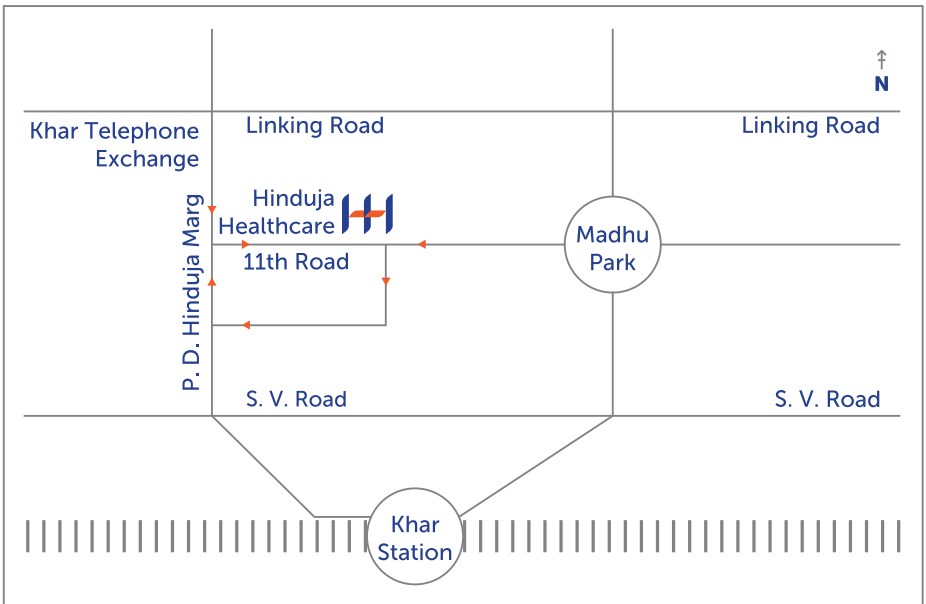
As soon as you notice any of the above signs, contact medical services at the earliest. Once a doctor diagnoses the problem as a brain attack, the patient will be asked to do a CT or MRI scan, and checked for thrombolysis, or a blood clot cluster.

In case of an acute stroke, the clot can be immediately dissolved, by injecting a thrombolytic drug, not later than 3 to 4½ hours after the attack. The earlier this injection is given, the better the chance of recovery. That is why it is so important to get to a hospital as soon as any symptoms are seen.

### Checklist for a brain stroke?

- Recognise the signs
- Note the time when these signs began
- Rush to your nearest hospital
- Give all and complete information, including the patients past medical history
- Being alert can help someone live, walk and talk again

You never know when you may need to rush to the hospital so keep the Hinduja Healthcare number handy. In case you suspect a brain stroke, go straight to the Neurological Unit at Hinduja Healthcare and speak to a medical professional. The unit is trained to handle emergencies as well as give the necessary support for all neurological issues, from minor to major.



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