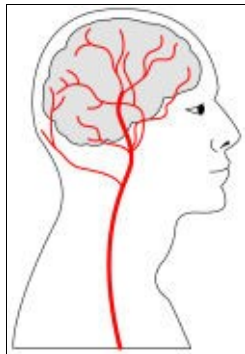


WHAT IS A STROKE?



A STROKE IS A BRAIN ATTACK

For your brain to function, it needs a constant blood supply, which provides vital nutrients and oxygen to the brain cells. A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off and brain cells are damaged or die. **Strokes are sudden and have an immediate effect.**

Recognise stroke symptoms **FAST**

You can recognise a stroke using the **FAST** test

FACIAL weakness: Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

ARM weakness: Can the person raise both arms?

SPEECH problems: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

TIME to call 511.

If a person fails any one of these tests, get help immediately by dialing 511.

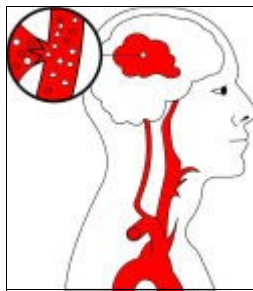
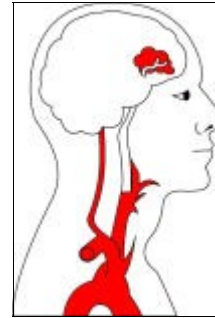
A speedy response can help reduce the damage to a person's brain and improve their chances of a full recovery. A delay in getting help can result in death or long-term disabilities.

TYPES OF STROKES

There are two main types of stroke.

Ischaemic strokes happen when something blocks an artery that carries blood to the brain. There are several possible causes:

- a blood clot forms in a main artery to the brain
- a blood clot, air bubble or fat globule forms in a blood vessel and is carried to the brain
- there is a blockage in the tiny bloody vessels deep inside the brain.



Haemorrhagic strokes happen when a blood vessel bursts and bleeds into the brain (a haemorrhage).

The haemorrhage may be due to:

- a vessel bursting within the brain itself, or
- a blood vessel on the surface of the brain bleeding into the area between the brain and the skull.

Temporary symptoms may indicate a mini-stroke

Sometimes the blockage in the blood supply to the brain is temporary, and a person will have the symptoms of a stroke for a short time.

This is called a **transient ischaemic attack (TIA)** or mini stroke. A TIA is a sign that part of the brain is not getting enough blood, and there is a risk of a more serious stroke in future. As with major strokes, you must seek medical attention immediately.

Resources: The Stroke Association - UK

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados
#3 Railway View, Ladymeade Gardens, Jemmotts Lane, St Michael. BB11156.
Tel: (246) 437-3312. Fax: (246) 430-9898
Email: enquiries@hsfbarbados.org. Website: www.hsfbarbados.org