

### What is stroke?

A stroke occurs when blood flow to a certain part of the brain is suddenly blocked or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. When this happens, the brain does not get the oxygen and nutrients it needs and damage to the brain results. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States.

People who don't die from a stroke can have a lot of problems such as not being able to move part of their body, as well as speech and emotional changes. If stroke is treated within 3 hours, the risk of death and being disabled can be less.

Stroke symptoms appear suddenly, and often there is more than one symptom at the same time. Some major symptoms include:

- ◆ numbness or weakness of the face, arms, or legs
- ◆ confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others
- ◆ trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- ◆ trouble walking or loss of balance
- ◆ severe headache

### What are the risk factors for stroke?

Stroke is usually caused by a number of factors. The more risk factors one has, the greater the chance for having a stroke. Some risk factors cannot be changed or controlled, while other risk factors can be controlled.

#### ◆ Risk factors you can control:

- High blood pressure (140/90 or above) is the most important risk factor
- Smoking or drinking more than 1 alcoholic drink a day
- Obesity
- Diabetes or heart disease
- Diet high in fat, calories, and cholesterol
- Lack of exercise

#### Signs of a Stroke



