

# What is a stroke? What is a TIA?

stroke.org.nz

## What is a stroke?

**A stroke is sudden loss of brain function.**

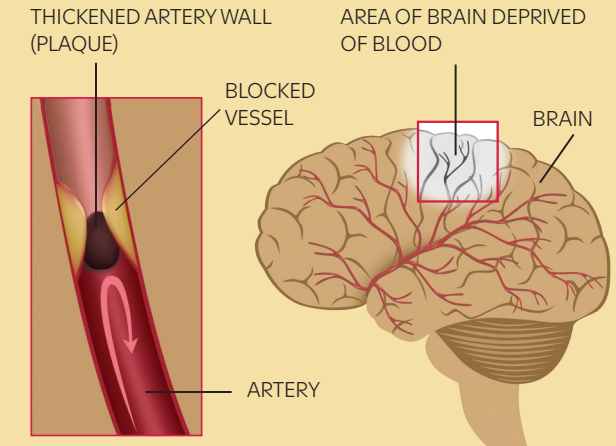
Stroke is caused by either a blockage (usually a blood clot) that restricts the flow of blood to part of the brain, or when a blood vessel bursts and damages brain cells. Normal blood flow is essential to bring oxygen to brain cells so they can work properly. In both situations, without normal oxygen flow to the brain cells, the affected part of the brain is damaged. If blood flow is not restored quickly, this damage cannot be repaired.



## Blocked blood vessel in brain causing a stroke

### Ischaemic stroke

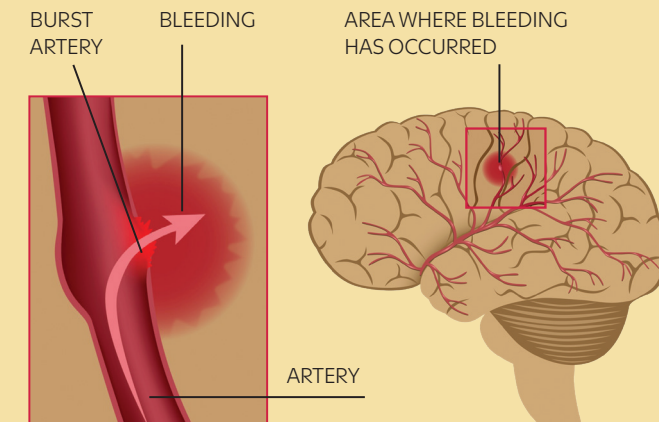
Blood supply in brain is blocked or insufficient.



## Bleed into brain causing a stroke

### Haemorrhagic stroke

Blood vessel expands and bursts, with bleeding into brain.



## Impact of stroke

**The effects of a stroke vary depending on the part of the brain affected and the extent of the damage.**

Some people make a full recovery and can return to their normal lives. Others may experience disabilities that range from mild to severe; while some of these disabilities may improve over time and be manageable, many can be long-lasting or permanent. The most common challenges due to stroke include limb or face weakness or numbness, problems with speaking, vision, walking, and fatigue. A small number of individuals will require full-time medical care following a stroke, and in some cases, a stroke can be fatal.

## Who does stroke affect?

Anyone can have a stroke. Although strokes often happen to older people, up to 30% of strokes happen in people younger than 65. Very young people, including children and babies, can have strokes.

Every year, it's estimated that over 9,000 strokes and an unknown number of transient ischaemic attacks happen in New Zealand.

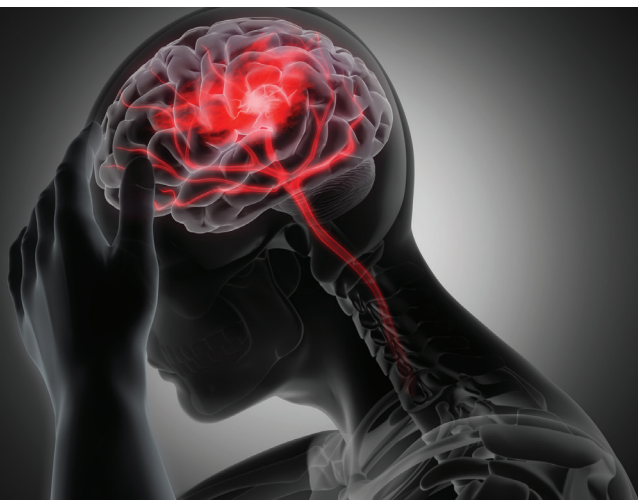
## What is a TIA?

**TIA stands for transient ischaemic attack.**

A TIA is like a stroke, except that the signs last for a short amount of time and no longer than 24 hours, and show no damage on brain imaging.

Although the signs do not last long, a TIA is very serious. If untreated, up to 18% of people with TIA will have a full-blown stroke within 3 months, 12% within 7 days, and 8% within 48 hours.

Because of this, a TIA is often called a warning stroke or mini-stroke and requires very urgent treatment.



## Driving after a stroke or TIA

After a stroke or TIA, you need to speak to your health professional about when it is safe for you to drive again.

You can find out more about driving after a stroke or TIA on our website: [stroke.org.nz/affected-by-stroke](https://stroke.org.nz/affected-by-stroke).



## Reducing your risk of stroke

If you or someone you love has experienced a stroke, it's important to understand why it occurred to reduce the risk of further strokes.

Up to 90% of strokes are linked to ten risk factors, many of which can be reduced or modified. To learn about how to reduce your risk of stroke, visit our website: [stroke.org.nz/understanding-stroke](https://stroke.org.nz/understanding-stroke).

## Support available after stroke

You don't need to go through stroke recovery alone – Stroke Aotearoa New Zealand is here to help.

Free helpline: **0800 STROKE (0800 78 76 53)**

Email support: [help@stroke.org.nz](mailto:help@stroke.org.nz)

Online resources:

[stroke.org.nz/affected-by-stroke](https://stroke.org.nz/affected-by-stroke)

Free counselling for young people:

**0800 What's Up (0800 942 8787)**

➔ Call **0800 78 76 53** or email [help@stroke.org.nz](mailto:help@stroke.org.nz) for free support and guidance.

## About Stroke Aotearoa New Zealand

Stroke Aotearoa New Zealand is the national charity dedicated to stroke prevention and improving outcomes for stroke survivors and their whānau. The generosity of individuals allows us to provide every aspect of our life-changing services.

If you want to find out more about donating or fundraising to help protect the lives of people living in your community, please call **0800 45 99 54** or email [fundraising@stroke.org.nz](mailto:fundraising@stroke.org.nz).

