

# STROKE

Recognizing the signs, symptoms and risk factors of a stroke can save your life. A good motto to remember is that "TIME IS BRAIN".

## Stroke Symptoms

- Sudden slurring of speech
- Weakness of one side of the body
- Difficulty speaking
- Difficulty walking
- Worsening confusion

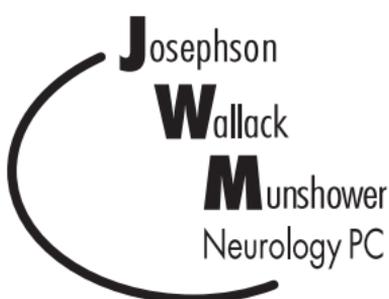
**These symptoms represent a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately as TIME IS BRAIN.**

Clot dissolving medications can now be used to dissolve the brain clots and improve recovery if treatment can be started promptly. Mechanical clot extraction has also recently been found to be very effective and may soon be available in most hospital stroke centers.

## Minimize Your Stroke Risk

**You can minimize your stroke risk by doing the following:**

- Take prescribed medications regularly.
- Control high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.
- Exercise regularly (doctor permitting).
- Control your weight.
- Treat sleep apnea.



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## Stroke Risk Factors

A stroke is more common in patients with cardiovascular disease and in those who have had previous strokes. Stroke risk is highest immediately after having a stroke. Therefore, correcting the risk factors is essential. Some risk factors are not correctable (such as family history and being 60 years of age and older), however, others are within your control.

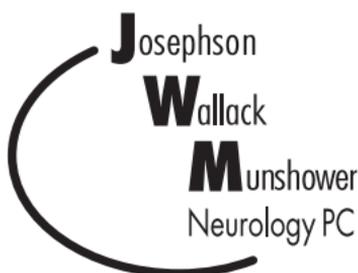
Your Neurologist will test you for all treatable and correctable stroke risk factors. Antiplatelet medications are usually recommended in most cases, however patients with severe heart disease may benefit from stronger blood thinners.

## Correctable Risk Factors

- High blood pressure (common)
- Diabetes (common)
- High cholesterol (common)
- Blood clotting factors
- Cardiac rhythm disorders (especially atrial fibrillation)
- Heart failure
- Obesity
- Sleep apnea (very common)

Your risk of sleep apnea increases if you are obese; have a short, thick neck; snore; experience daytime sleepiness; experience non-refreshing sleep at night; or have poor control of your diabetes or hypertension.

It is therefore important to be tested and treated for sleep apnea. Treatment has been shown to help with management of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, hardening of the arteries and weight loss.



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For more information about stroke visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) (National Stroke Association).

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