

TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK (TIA)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A type of stroke that lasts only a few minutes. They are sometimes called "mini strokes." The term transient is used to describe a condition that lasts a short time. Ischemic describes an inadequate blood flow. TIAs most often affect adults over age 40.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Symptoms are brief. Most last less than 5 minutes. A few may last an hour and rarely, up to 24 hours.
- Loss of muscle function on one side of the body.
- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Tingling in the arms and legs.
- Numbness.
- Vision disturbance or temporary blindness in one eye.
- Confusion.
- Faintness without loss of consciousness.
- Slurred speech or inability to speak.

CAUSES

TIAs happen when blood flow to a part of the brain is reduced for a short period. The reduced blood flow may be due to a small blood clot in an artery. It may be caused by a spasm of a brain artery causing it to narrow. TIAs normally do not cause lasting injury to the brain such as a stroke does.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Aging, males or African Americans.
- Personal or family history of high blood pressure, atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), or stroke.
- Smoking or excess alcohol use.
- Diabetes, heart disease, or carotid artery disease.
- High cholesterol levels or high homocysteine levels.
- Obesity.
- Sedentary lifestyle (being physically inactive).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Exercise daily. Maintain a healthy weight. Eat a healthy diet.
- Don't smoke or use alcohol to excess.
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly. If it is high, get medical advice for treatment to reduce it.
- Daily aspirin may help. Ask your health care provider.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- There are normally no lasting effects (such as weakness on one side) from a TIA. Treatment of TIAs can help reduce your risk factors for stroke.
- TIAs often recur. Symptoms of each attack may be similar or different from others.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Stroke. Without treatment, over 30% of persons who have TIAs have strokes within 5 years.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your symptoms and activities. Medical tests may include studies to check your heart, brain and blood vessel function.
- Emergency hospital care may be needed.
- Treatment may include drugs, taking control of risk factors (diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and others), and lifestyle changes. A treatment plan will be based on your individual case.
- Stop smoking and/or alcohol use. Get counseling, join a support group, or find other methods to help you quit.
- Surgery (endarterectomy) may be needed to remove plaques (fatty deposits) from carotid arteries in the neck.
- Heart valve-replacement surgery may be needed.
- To learn more: American Stroke Association, 7272 Greenville Ave., Dallas, TX 75231; (888) 478-7653; website: www.strokeassociation.org.

MEDICATIONS

Anticoagulants (blood thinners) may be prescribed to decrease the risk of blood clots. Aspirin can help decrease the risk of future stroke. Other drugs can be prescribed for those unable to take aspirin.

ACTIVITY

- If you have frequent TIAs, you may be advised to avoid or limit certain activities that could risk injury to you or others.
- Exercise daily or as advised.

DIET

- Eat a well-balanced diet that is low in salt and fat. Include plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, and fiber.
- A weight loss diet is recommended for obese patients.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of a TIA. Seek emergency help.
- Other symptoms occur after treatment begins

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page