

Transient Ischaemic Attack

What is it?

A transient ischaemic attack, also known as a TIA, is a minor stroke. It occurs when blood supply to the brain is blocked for a short time.

TIAs are caused by a blood clot or blockage which dissolves or dislodges on its own. Most TIAs resolve in around one hour. Some only last a few minutes. TIAs are sometimes called mini strokes as they cause the same symptoms that occur in strokes.

Common symptoms include slurred speech, weakness in one side of the body and difficulty seeing. A person showing these symptoms needs urgent treatment to check if they have had a TIA or a stroke.

There is a high risk of stroke after a TIA. The highest risk is within the first 24 to 48 hours. Treatment for TIAs includes medication, surgery and healthy lifestyle changes.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will check your risk to see if a stroke is likely in the next 24 to 48 hours. If your risk is high, your GP will send you to the emergency department straight away. They may also:

- Check your medical records
- Check for stroke signs like speech problems, vision loss and limb weakness
- Check your blood pressure and heart health
- Exclude any other health issues

Your GP may also talk to you about how to manage your heart disease risk factors. They may suggest you see a specialist (neurologist) for more tests.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may see you in one month or sooner to check your health and risk of a future stroke. Your GP may:

- Keep helping you manage your risk factors
- Manage your other health concerns
- Talk to you about how to check for signs of a stroke
- Prescribe medication and check for side effects
- Arrange regular check-ups

Your GP may also discuss healthy living tips, like:

- Quitting smoking
- Weight loss
- Drinking safe amounts
- Exercise
- Safe driving
- Rehabilitation

When should I call an ambulance?



A stroke is a medical emergency. If you or someone else shows the signs of stroke, call Triple 0 straight away. Look for the F.A.S.T. signs. **Face:** Check their face. Has their mouth drooped? **Arms:** Can they lift both arms? **Speech:** Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you? **Time:** Is critical. Call Triple 0.

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What can I do?

Take your medication as your GP instructs. Make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce your risk of stroke:

- Quit smoking
- Switch to a low-fat, low-salt diet
- Keep to a healthy weight
- Move daily
- Follow your treatment plan
- Ask your GP how to check for signs of a mini stroke



What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What are the risk factors for having a stroke?*
- Am I at risk of a heart attack?*
- What are the treatment options?*
- What other lifestyle changes should I make?*
- What can I do to reduce my risk?*



What supports are available?

Public hospitals

Your GP can refer you to a public specialist at a local public hospital.

Private specialists

Private specialists, called neurologists, are also an option. Ask your GP to refer you.

Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more, these resources can help:

- **Better Health Channel** – Transient Ischaemic Attack: betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- **PatientInfo** – Transient Ischaemic Attack: patient.info
- **Stroke Foundation Australia** – Transient Ischaemic Attack: strokefoundation.com.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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