

Mini-stroke

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) is also known as 'mini-stroke' in layman's language because its symptoms are similar to those of a stroke. The difference is that TIA symptoms don't last long.

In the case of a stroke, the blood-flow stays blocked, and the brain suffers permanent damage.

With TIA, blood flowing to the brain is blocked or reduced for only a short while after which the symptoms disappear.

TIA symptoms include:

- Sudden loss of strength, or numbness in the face, arm or leg on one side of the body;
- Sudden difficulty in speaking or understanding;
- Dizziness, or sudden loss of balance;
- Sudden vision problem in one eye.

TIA is stroke-related. More than 30 per cent of people suffer a stroke a few weeks after a TIA attack.

A smaller percentage suffer a stroke within three months. TIA seldom causes permanent damage to the brain but studies show that a person who suffered a TIA is more likely to come down with Alzheimer's Disease (a progressive and fatal brain disease) at a later date.

Recognising TIA symptoms is important to reducing the risk of stroke. If one experiences a TIA symptom, see a doctor immediately.

A healthy lifestyle and medication can reduce the risk of further TIAs or a stroke. Keeping one's blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose level under control, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake may also prevent TIAs.