

Acute Ischemic Stroke and Treatment

Patient Information Sheet

When the Elliot Hospital care team identifies a stroke, we act swiftly. We ensure that you and your support person(s) are kept informed about the your condition and treatment options at every stage. Our collaborative efforts aim to provide the best possible chance of recovery.

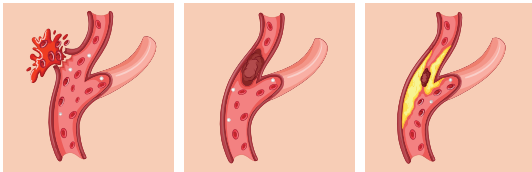
This handout is designed to provide detailed information on ischemic stroke and treatments that may be recommended as part of your initial and ongoing care. Always ask your care team if you have questions or concerns.

What is a Stroke?

Many people think that a stroke occurs in the heart, but a stroke occurs in the brain. Also called a "brain attack," a stroke results when oxygen to the brain is cut off by an interruption in blood supply.

What is an Ischemic Stroke?

This is the most common type of stroke. Blood vessels that carry blood to the brain from the heart are called arteries. When an artery is blocked, this is called an ischemic stroke. Arteries can become blocked by a blood clot or by plaque that breaks off from the artery walls. When plaque builds up, it is called atherosclerosis. This can narrow the arteries, also leading to stroke.



hemorrhagic

ischemic

atherosclerosis

The cells in the part of the brain fed by the blocked artery will die without oxygen from the blood. The parts and functions of the body affected by the stroke depend on where the stroke is happening in the brain.

Treatment

Time is critical in stroke care.

Emergency treatment is needed to restore blood flow to the brain. The sooner a patient arrives to the hospital after symptoms start, the greater the chances for effective treatment and recovery. This is why we ask when you were last seen without symptoms and when symptoms started to calculate how long it has been since the stroke started. Following an exam by our stroke team, treatment offered may include:

Medication: Depending on time and other important health information, treatment with a clot-busting medication (called a thrombolytic) can be given for some patients that can dissolve the clot and restore blood flow.

Other medications may be given to lower blood pressure, prevent further clotting, control nausea, and treat pain. With any medication given, we will monitor your brain and body through examination, measurements, and asking how you feel.

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Procedures

Pictures of the brain help us to identify where the stroke is happening in the brain. We will obtain Computed Tomography (CT or "CAT") scans of the brain and blood vessels to locate the blockage. You will be taken to the CT room and safely moved to the machine for the pictures.

We will draw blood samples for analysis, which will provide the care team with important information about your health and condition.

We will measure your blood pressure, oxygen, and heart rate using a cardiac monitor. The monitor wires will be placed on your body with stickers and a blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm. The care team will use these measurements throughout your care.

An "EKG," or electrocardiogram, will be performed to gather important information about how your heart is functioning. The team will connect a series of wires to your body using stickers and print a picture of your heart's electrical conduction. A doctor will review the EKG.

An "IV" or peripheral intravenous line, will be inserted so we can give fast acting medication when needed.

Telestroke consultation: Elliot Hospital partners with Massachusetts General Hospital to evaluate patients with acute stroke. We may use a video monitor to virtually connect to a stroke specialist to discuss your care. Working together, we will create a plan of treatment. This may include a medication and/or a special procedure called a thrombectomy.

Thrombectomy: a thrombectomy is a surgical procedure to remove a clot and may be recommended for patients who meet certain criteria. Thrombectomies are performed at specialized stroke centers in Boston. Most of our patients needing a thrombectomy are sent to Massachusetts General Hospital by a helicopter or in an ambulance, as the procedure timing is very important.

Your Hospital Stay

Once emergency treatment has been provided, the care team will focus on understanding what led to the stroke. Additional testing may be recommended to evaluate your risk for future stroke or other serious health conditions. Medications may be prescribed for longer term management of blood pressure, cholesterol, clot prevention, and for an irregular heart rhythm, if detected.

Our stroke care team includes doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, technicians, pharmacists, rehabilitation therapists, and other experts who are all committed to working together to provide you with excellent care. You and your support person(s) will be kept informed and are encouraged to ask questions about your treatment.

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