

What is a Stroke?

The most common form of a Stroke is the result of a sudden disruption of the flow of blood to parts of the brain.

When blood cannot reach parts of the brain, the oxygen supply to those areas is cut off and the brain cells die (infarct).

Less frequently, blood vessels burst and blood spreads into nearby brain areas (haemorrhage). The result of these processes is a Stroke.

Functions normally controlled by these damaged brain areas are affected. In many cases, unconsciousness and/or partial paralysis may occur. This is often the immediate outward sign that a Stroke has occurred.

There are two different types of Stroke (Brain Attack). They are Ischaemic Stroke and Haemorrhagic Stroke.

Ischaemic Stroke

In everyday life, blood clotting is beneficial. When you are bleeding from a wound, blood clots work to slow and eventually stop the bleeding. In the case of Stroke, however, clots are dangerous because they can block arteries and cut off blood flow. Ischaemic Stroke is the most common type of Stroke (80% - 85% of Strokes are ischaemic). An Ischaemic Stroke is caused when a clot blocks or 'plugs' a blood vessel in the brain. There are two ways that a clot Stroke can occur.

- An embolic Stroke occurs when a blood clot forms somewhere in the body and travels through the blood stream to the brain.

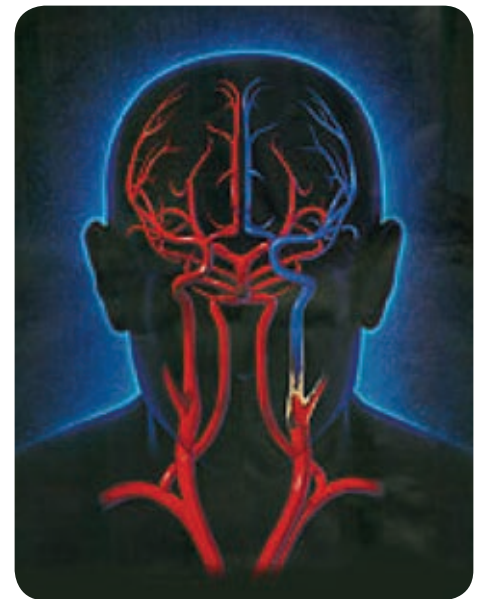
- A thrombotic Stroke occurs when blood vessels narrow as a result of blood fat, cholesterol or calcium which grow to completely block the blood vessel.

Haemorrhagic Stroke



A haemorrhagic Stroke is caused when a blood vessel in the brain breaks or 'erupts'. There are two types of haemorrhagic Stroke: a subarachnoid haemorrhage and an intracerebral haemorrhage.

- An intracerebral haemorrhage, which is the more common form, involves bleeding within the brain tissue itself.
- With a subarachnoid haemorrhage the bleeding occurs in the space around the brain. This is often due to an aneurysm - a thin or weak spot on a blood vessel wall.



...a Stroke is the result of a sudden disruption of the flow of blood to parts of the brain

Transient Ischaemic Attack

Sometimes called a mini Stroke, a TIA has similar symptoms to a Stroke but the sufferer appears to recover very quickly. The Medical definition for TIA is:

- Transient: Symptoms disappear in less than one day (24 hours)
- Ischaemic: Failure of blood flow to part of the brain or eye
- Attack: Sudden onset of symptoms which vary from person to person depending on which part of the brain or eye is starved of blood.

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What is a Transient Ischaemic Attack?

TIA symptoms depend on which blood vessel to the brain is blocked and which part of the brain is starved of blood. Common symptoms include attacks of weakness, clumsiness, numbness or pins and needles of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body, slurring of speech or difficulty in finding words or blurred vision in one or both eyes. TIAs do not usually cause "blackout" fainting or loss of consciousness.

Is a Diagnosis Important?

There are several illnesses, which may give very similar symptoms to those of a TIA and require different treatments. These include migraine, epileptic fits or a seizure, a low blood sugar level, fainting and changes in the heart rhythm. So it is important that people with any of the TIA symptoms should go to see their doctor to find out whether they have had a TIA or some other kind of attack.

Why is a TIA Important?

A person who has had a TIA has an increased risk of suffering a Stroke. The risk of having a Stroke in the first year after a TIA is about 10% but then falls by about 5% each year.

What Treatment is Available?

The treatment depends on the results of a careful assessment by the doctor. Anybody who smokes should stop completely. People with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or high sugar levels in the blood can usually be helped by a healthier diet, though drugs are sometimes needed. A doctor may also prescribe aspirin to thin the blood: this reduces the risk of having a Stroke after a TIA. Sometimes TIAs are due to narrowing of a blood vessel in the neck; this can be treated by an operation called a carotid endarterectomy. Therefore, if anyone has an attack with symptoms similar to those described, it is important that they should see a doctor at once, so that if needed, the earliest possible treatment can be given.

Warning Signs of Stroke

- D**izziness, unsteadiness or an unusually severe headache
- A** change in mental abilities
- N**umbness, weakness or paralysis in face, arm or leg on one side of the body
- G**arbled speech or inability to speak
- E**ye problems sudden dimness of vision in one eye or double vision
- R**eceive immediate medical help, as these symptoms may disappear quickly, and there may be no second warning

REMEMBER

A Stroke is a medical emergency and by recognising the symptoms you could save a life maybe even your own.

Stroke Recovery Association of NSW

The Stroke Association of NSW aims to maximise the recovery of individuals who have suffered a Stroke and reduce the impact on their family/carers and the community. The Association is a focal point for information about Stroke recovery and prevention.

The Association was established in 1977 and since then has played a major role in the recovery and support of many Stroke survivors, assisted in the development of policy and best practice. It has also assisted in establishing some 52 Stroke Recovery Clubs throughout NSW. Currently the Stroke Recovery Association provides the following services:

- Telephone Counselling
- Stroke Information Kits
- Co-ordination of Stroke Recovery Clubs
- Stroke Seminars and workshops
- A library of books, videos and brochures
- Regular newsletter on Stroke issues to members
- Referrals to other services
- Co-ordination of Stroke Awareness Week

Stroke Recovery Association NSW

Phone: 1300 650 594

Web: www.strokensw.org.au

Berkeley Vale Staff & Volunteers Celebrate 10 & 15 Year Service

On Thursday 7th August, 2008 a group of Berkeley Vale Private Hospital staff and one of the hospitals volunteers were presented with service awards for ten years and fifteen years service to the hospital.

Ten year celebrations were:

- John Blade (Maintenance Manager)
- Monica Freeman (Payroll officer)
- Cheryl Graham (Occupational Therapy manager)
- Jacqueline Wilson (Registered Nurse)

Fifteen Year celebrations were:

- Donna Andrew (Registered Nurse)
- Felicia Barnett (Catering services)
- Wendy Brook (Registered Nurse)
- Glenda Making (Catering services)
- Deb Paton (Endorsed Enrolled Nurse)
- Robbie Small (Social Work Manager)
- Dr Michael Smith (Rehabilitation Specialist)
- Anne Soutar (Registered Nurse)
- Hope Waldock (Volunteer Lady)
- Marilyn Clayton (Chief Executive Officer./Director of Nursing)

What makes the celebrations so special for Berkeley Vale Private is that the hospital only turned 18 on the 3rd of August, 2008, which shows the dedication of all the below staff and just how much Berkeley Vale Private is a wonderful place to work.





Your guide to staying cool on the coast this summer

Heatwaves can kill!

Heatwaves are perhaps our most under-rated natural hazard. In Australia during the 20th century, heatwaves caused more deaths than any other natural hazard. In 1939 alone, a heatwave in southern Australia caused 438 deaths and seriously affected many thousands. Heatwaves also cause expensive livestock/crop losses and damage to roads, electrical equipment, railways, bridges etc.

Heat stress and those most at risk

Every summer people suffer from heat stress when the body absorbs more heat than it can dispel. Prompt action will avoid the potentially fatal effects of fully-developed heat stroke. At most risk are young children; the elderly; people with alcohol, weight, or health problems; or those on medication/drugs with a dehydrating effect. Seek medical advice in such cases.

Avoiding heat stress

- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose, porous natural fibre clothes. Avoid strenuous activities.
- Drink 2 to 3 litres of water per day, even if not thirsty.
- Avoid alcoholic, caffeinated or carbonated (soft) drinks.
- Don't take salt tablets unless prescribed by a doctor.
- Avoid heavy protein foods (eg meat, dairy products) which increase body heat and fluid loss.
- Keep your home cool with curtains, shutters, or awnings on the sunny sides and open windows at night.
- If you don't have air conditioning, use fans, damp clothing and have frequent cool showers.
- Spend as much time as possible in air conditioned buildings (eg shopping centres, galleries, museums).
- Avoid direct sunlight. Wear a hat and sunscreen as sunburn limits your ability to cope with heat.
- If you work outside, keep hat and clothing damp.
- Don't leave children or pets in parked vehicles.
- If you suffer chronic illness or feel ill, see a doctor.
- Keep animals in the shade with plenty of water.

Central Coast Carer Respite Centre

Who Are Carers?

Carers look after family members of friends who are frail aged, have a disability, chronic condition or mental illness. Caring can be rewarding but also exhausting so carers need to take a break.

What is respite?

Respite is a break from the responsibility of looking after someone. It may be for a few hours, a day, a night or longer. Respite is a way of relieving the stress of being a carer and if you're a carer, making time for yourself is important for your own health and well-being. Respite can mean different things to different people. Some carers need the person they care for to stay somewhere else for a while, some need a couple of hours off a week, respite to another may be a person to do the home help for a change. Respite can be staying together but giving the

carer supports. It may be a regular weekly event, it may be something that happens only once a year such as a holiday.

Where does it happen?

Respite can happen in a variety of settings that suit the carer and the person.

Linking carers to respite – the Central Coast Carer Respite Centre

The Central Coast Carer Respite Centre is part of the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres which is one of over 50 federally funded Carer Respite Centres across Australia. They can:

- Provide information and advice about respite options
- Help with organising emergency or planned respite
- Emergency respite care service phone and Freecall number 1800 059 059
- Put carers in contact with local carer support groups and assist with organising residential respite.

- Purchase the respite if necessary

They will at all times:

- Work with carers to plan options which suite the carer's needs and the needs of the person they care for
- Strive to enable carers to have better access to locally based services
- Assist in identifying gaps in service provision for carers

Who can use the service of the Central Coast Carer Respite Centre?

Carers in the areas of Bateau Bay, Gosford, Kincumber, Mangrove Mountain, Toukley, Woy Woy and Wyong

No matter where you live, there's a Carer Respite Centre for you

Central Coast Carer Respite Centre:
Phone: (02) 4348 9933

Community Education Forum



Berkeley Vale Private Hospital is proud to present the second in a series of four free community health information sessions to be held over the next 2 years. The speakers will include specialist physicians and surgeons who practice at the hospital.

STROKE PREVENTION

TOPICS:

- Risk Factors - What is a stroke?
- Prevention and Reducing the risk of stroke
- Treatment – acute and rehabilitation

PRESENTED BY:

Dr Michael Smith
(Director of Rehabilitation Berkeley Vale Private Hospital)
Dr Jonathan Sturm (Neurologist)

In Attendance:

Dr Purdy Lau (Rehabilitation Specialist - Berkeley Vale Private Hospital)

Where: Mingara Convention Centre
Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi NSW

Date: Monday, 27 October, 2008

Time: 3:45pm – 5:00pm approximately

Light refreshments provided

To register for this Free Community Health update call Joy Croake (Personal Assistant) Berkeley Vale Private Hospital on (02) **4389 1970** (Mon – Thurs during business hours).

If you are a member of a specific community group or local club and would like to know more about the services the hospital is able to provide, and would be interested in us doing a presentation to your community group, please contact Michelle Turner (Quality Coordinator) on **02 4389 1970**.