

What Is a Stroke?

A stroke is an injury to your brain.

It can happen in different parts of the brain ...

and it can affect whatever area of the body is controlled by that part.

For example, if a stroke happens in the part of the brain that controls how you move, it can affect how you walk or use your arms.

There are two types of stroke ... ischemic and hemorrhagic.

Ischemic strokes are more common.

An ischemic stroke happens when a blood clot blocks a blood vessel in the brain.

This means that blood can't flow to some part of the brain.

Without blood ... and the oxygen it carries ...

this part of the brain can start to die ...

and the part of the body that's controlled by the injured area of the brain ...

well, that part of the body can't work properly.

A clot may form in the blood vessel.

Or it may form in another part of the body ... often the heart ...

and then travel to the brain.

The other type of stroke ... a hemorrhagic stroke ...

is caused by bleeding in the brain.

The bleeding may happen because a blood vessel in the brain leaks or bursts.

When this happens, blood fills the space inside or around the brain.

As a result ... part of the brain can start to die.

Because brain damage happens fast with a stroke, getting treatment right away may give people the best chance for recovery.

A stroke may cause mild problems that can get better quickly.

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Or it may cause more severe problems that can last the rest of a person's life.

After a stroke, some people may have a hard time walking ... talking ...

or understanding things. Other people have problems eating or swallowing.

But with stroke rehab, people can learn ways to adapt to the changes caused by a stroke.

And they can work toward getting back some of the skills and abilities they had before their stroke.