

Recognise signs of stroke and act FAST

Date published: 14 February 2019

Stroke is a common cause of death and disability. It happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off and brain cells are damaged or die. You should 'act FAST' and call 999 if you think someone is having a stroke. It could save their life.

Signs and symptoms

If someone has a stroke, knowing the signs and symptoms and acting FAST can:

- improve their chances of survival
- reduce the level of disability that results from a stroke

The most common symptoms to look out for are blurred vision, slurred speech or muscle weakness when otherwise feeling well.

Check for the following:

- face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- arms – can they raise both arms and keep them there?
- speech – is their speech slurred?
- time – time to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs

A full-blown stroke could include:

- numbness or weakness in face, arm, hand or leg on just one side of the body
- confusion or difficulty speaking or understanding what someone is saying
- difficulty swallowing
- sudden dimness, blurring or loss of vision in one or both eyes
- trouble walking and dizziness
- loss of balance or co-ordination
- severe headache, sudden vomiting or unconsciousness

With a stroke it's important to act immediately, as early treatment is vital. You should either:

- dial 999
- or go to a hospital Accident and Emergency department

When 999 is called they will be brought by ambulance to the nearest acute stroke centre.

You can find further information on this page:

Preventing strokes

Your chances of having a stroke reduce if you understand the risks and take action to prevent a stroke happening.

You can reduce your risk of having a stroke by:

- knowing and managing your personal risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, an irregular heartbeat (for example, atrial fibrillation) and high blood cholesterol
- exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight
- reducing the amount of alcohol you drink
- stopping smoking

More useful links

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Feedback

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[NI Direct phone line currently not working](#)

Date published: 29 August 2017

We are experiencing difficulties presently with the NI Direct phone line. This is being worked on and we hope it will be fixed shortly.

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ICT apprenticeship scheme offers opportunities

If you're interested in a career in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), opportunities are available on the new ICT apprenticeship scheme. The closing date for applications is 5.00 pm on 8 September.

How to apply

The scheme has more than 30 apprenticeships available in various software development and IT infrastructure roles.

This innovative apprenticeship scheme, involving government and a number of ICT employers, is an excellent opportunity to start a career in ICT.

It will make sure that, when you're seeking employment, you'll have the necessary skills to take advantage of potential opportunities.

Details on how to apply can be found on this page:

If you're successful in being recruited as an apprentice, you will be given the opportunity to develop skills, achieve qualifications and enhance your career prospects.

More useful links

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GCSE results – support and advice

The GCSE results are out. Now it's time to make important decisions about your future and there are many options available for you to consider.

Contact a careers adviser

The [Careers Service](#) has a team of professionally-qualified careers advisers who offer impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

To contact a careers adviser, you can:

Careers advisers will be available from 9.00 am to 7.30 pm to provide support to GCSE students on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 August.

Careers advisers can provide advice and guidance on:

- Further and Higher Education
- continuing on at school
- apprenticeships
- CVs
- job applications
- job interviews
- advice on job trends, including occupations which will be important in the future

Online information

Further information on the many options available to you are also available in the following section:

If you have an issue with a result

If you have a query on any issue relating to your exam results (for example appeals, re-marks or re-sits) then contact your school, college, or the [Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) helpline:

The helpline will be open 9.00 am to 5.00 pm until Wednesday 30 August.

More useful links

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[Emergency payment scheme for flooding](#)

Following the recent heavy rainfall, there is an emergency scheme for householders affected by related flooding. Individual householders who have suffered severe inconvenience can claim a £1,000 payment from their local council.

Contact your local council

If you feel that you may be entitled to the payment, contact your local council as soon as possible.

Your local council will arrange for an urgent inspection of your property. If the council decides that your claim is eligible, you will receive your payment promptly.

You can find contact details for all local councils on the page below:

The payment is an offer of practical help to those who have suffered severe inconvenience, to make sure homes are made habitable as quickly as possible.

It is not a compensation payment.

You can also find useful information about making an insurance claim at this link:

People are also asked to keep an eye out for elderly and vulnerable neighbours and check that they are ok.

More useful links

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