

## Regional Stroke Prevention Clinic

### West GTA Regional Stroke Prevention Clinic

100 Queensway West  
Mississauga, Ontario  
L5B 1B8

Phone: (905) 848-7379  
Fax: (905) 848-7669

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Your care team:

Stroke Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Stroke Clinic Nurses: **Harmeet** or **Helen**

Clerk: **Shannan**

Doppler technician: **Moe**

You were seen in the Stroke Prevention Clinic because you may have had a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA), also called a mini stroke. This can be a stressful time for you and you may have questions about your care. This handout will help to answer some of those questions.

For more information on stroke and TIA visit:

West GTA Stroke Network Website: [www.westgtastroke.ca](http://www.westgtastroke.ca)

Heart and Stroke Website: [www.heartandstroke.on.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca)

For cancellation of: ECG, Echocardiogram, TEE, Echo Bubble Test  
Please call: **905 848-7674**

For cancellation of: CT scan, CTA, MRI, MRA  
Please call: **905 848-7554**

For cancellation of: Carotid Doppler  
Please call: **905 848-7485**

For cancellation of: EEG, EMG  
Please call: \_\_\_\_\_

For cancellation of Loop Recorder  
Please call: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bring this booklet with you to your family doctor's appointment  
and to all your Stroke Prevention Clinic appointments.**

# Summary of your appointment at the

## West GTA Regional Stroke Prevention Clinic

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Clinic visit date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

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**Follow-up plan:**

After your initial visit, you will not necessarily be seen again in our clinic for follow-up.

All test results are tracked by the nurses in our clinic. If a follow-up appointment is required, our staff will contact you directly to book a date and time for another appointment.

We are always looking for ways to prevent strokes and improve lives of patients with stroke/TIA through research and therefore, a member of the stroke team may be in contact with you.

**Please note:** We do not telephone patients with test results. Your family doctor receives a copy of all your tests results.

When you receive your dates and time of these tests, please follow through with the test on the date and time proved to you. Many of these appointments are made well in advance. **If you cannot make the appointment, please contact the staff at the appropriate numbers to cancel and re-schedule (please see back of booklet).** This prevents missed appointments and gives another person an opportunity to use that appointment time.

| When you                 | Type of test                         | Purpose of test  | How the test is done  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CT Scan (Computerized Tomography)    | This test shows detailed images of the brain and helps to identify conditions in the brain.  | You lay in a scanner that takes picture of your brain using special x-rays.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CTA (CT Angiography)                 | To visualize blood flow in the arteries of the brain.  | You lay in a scanner and it uses a CT Scan and contrast dye injected into the arteries through an intravenous to take pictures of the blood vessels in the head and neck.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)     | This test shows detailed images of the brain and helps to identify conditions in the brain. You may need this if your doctor needs to see areas of the brain that cannot be seen | You lay still in a scanner and it uses magnetic field and radio waves to produce a 3 dimensional picture of the brain.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MRA (Magnetic Resonance Angiography) | To visualize blood flow in the arteries of the brain.  | You lay in a scanner and it uses magnetic field and radio waves and may or may not require contrast dye to take pictures of the blood vessels in the head and neck.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Carotid Doppler                      | To look for a plaque build-up that narrows the arteries in your neck and affects blood flow to   | Uses ultrasound to listen to the flow of your blood through your arteries.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ECHO Bubble Study                    | To look at the structure and function of the heart. In particular, this test detects if there is a hole in a wall of the heart.  | While an echocardiogram is done, bubbles of sterile salt water are injected into the bloodstream.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Echocardiogram                       | To look at the structure and function of the heart.  | Uses ultrasound waves to take pictures of your heart.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Holter/ Loop Monitor                 | To look for abnormal heart rhythms for an extended period of time  | It is a portable ECG and monitors your heart rhythm. Electrodes are placed on your chest, which are attached to a small recorder. You will carry this recorder with you in a pouch wherever you go except when bathing. |

## Who are we?

The West GTA Regional Stroke Prevention Clinic is one of 24 Stroke Prevention Clinic in Ontario. The Regional Stroke Prevention Clinics are supported by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care through the Regional Stroke Centres. The West GTA Stroke Network encompasses: Mississauga, Oakville, West Etobicoke, Milton, Acton, Georgetown, Brampton, Caledon and Orangeville. This clinic has been in operation since 2001. We see over 2500 patients per year.

## What do we do?

The Stroke Prevention Clinic provide rapid access to specialized assessment, including diagnostic tests and risk-factor management, for those suspected of experiencing a transient ischemic attack or non-disabling stroke.

You have been referred to the Regional Stroke Prevention Clinic because your family doctor or the doctor you saw in the emergency department suspects that you may have had a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or a minor stroke.

During your visit, you will be assessed by a nurse and a stroke neurologist. You will be asked questions regarding:

- How you have been feeling and symptoms that you have felt recently.
- Your medical history
- What medications you are on
- Your lifestyle habits

You may be ordered some tests in order to better understand why you felt the way you did.

You will be provided with information regarding your visit. A summary of your visit and all test results will be provided to your family doctor.

## Transient Ischemic Attack also known as a TIA

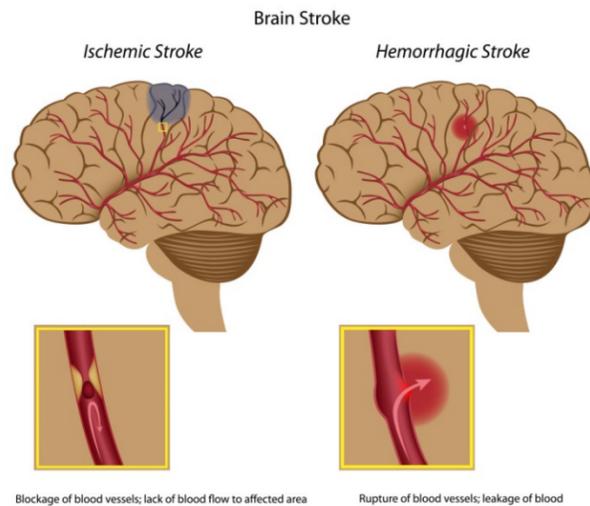
A TIA happens when blood flow to part of the brain is blocked or reduced, often by a blood clot. After a short time, blood flows again and the symptoms go away. The symptoms of TIA are almost the same as the symptoms of a stroke; however, the symptoms go away within a few minutes or hours.

A TIA is a serious warning that says something is wrong with blood flow to your brain and that you are at higher risk for having a stroke immediately after the TIA, up to one year later. The good news about TIA is that it gives you a chance to take action to reduce your risk.

## Stroke

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of flow of blood to the brain (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke). The interruption of blood flow or the rupture of blood vessels causes brain cells (neurons) in the affected area to die.

The effects of a stroke depend on where the brain was injured, as well as how much damage occurred. A stroke can impact any number of areas including your ability to move, see, remember, speak, reason and read and write.



**Both a TIA and a Stroke is considered an Emergency.**

## Treat your diabetes

Having high blood sugar damages blood vessels over time. Keep your blood sugar under control.

- Monitor your blood sugar as directed by your doctor
- Use diet, exercise and medication to keep your blood sugar within the recommended range.

## Tobacco use and smoking



Smoking doubles the risk of stroke when compared to a non-smoker. If you smoke, try as hard as possible to stop.

- Ask your doctor for advice on the most appropriate way for you to quit.
- Use quit-smoking aids, such as nicotine gum, patches, counselling
- Don't give up! Most smokers need several tries to quit. See each attempt as bringing you one step closer to successfully beating the habit

Quitting smoking can be difficult, so don't give up if you are not successful the first time.

## Alcohol Use



Drinking too much alcohol can increase blood pressure and the risk of stroke.

- Two or fewer standard drinks per day and fewer than 14 drinks per week for men and fewer than 9 drinks per week for women.
- Watch you portion sizes. A standard-sized drink is a 5-ounce glass of wine 12 ounce beer or 1.5 ounce glass of hard liquor.

## Lifestyle Modification

### Eat Well



A healthy diet can help you reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improve your overall health.

- Eat more foods from plants (vegetables, fruit, beans, grains, nuts)
- Eat more fish instead of red meat, poultry and eggs
- Limit your sodium (salt), fat and sugar intake

### Exercise



Physical activity includes anything that gets your body moving.

- Moderate exercise (an accumulation of 30 to 60 minutes) of walking (ideally brisk walking), jogging, cycling, swimming... 4-7 days each week in addition to your routine activities of daily living.
- **Break it up**...If you can't fit a 30 minute activity in one time; break it up into 10-minute segments. Remember all physical activity counts.
- **Make it fun**... Walk or bike with a friend, take a dance class...

### Lower your blood pressure



Maintain a blood pressure of less than 140/90

- Reduce the salt in your diet (about ½ teaspoon /day)
- Avoid high cholesterol foods (burgers, cheese, ice cream)
- Eat 4 to 5 cups of fruit and vegetables every day
- Exercise
- Quit smoking

## Learn the signs of stroke

**F**ACE is it drooping?  
**A** RMS can you raise both?  
**S** PEECH is it slurred or jumbled?  
**T** IME to call 9-1-1 right away.

ACT **F A S T** BECAUSE THE QUICKER YOU ACT,  
THE MORE OF THE PERSON YOU SAVE.

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**If you are experiencing  
these signs, call 911 right  
away.**

Stroke and heart attacks are a major cause of death in Canada. It is important for you to know how to minimize your risk of having a stroke or heart attack. Know your risk factors.

### What are the risk factors for stroke?

Some risk factors **are not** under your control  
See the ones that apply to you

- Age** (risk increases with age)
- Gender** (men have a greater risk than women)
- Family history** (stroke or heart attack)
- Ethnicity** (such as Aboriginal, African, South Asian)
- Previous Stroke or TIA**
- Heart disorders** (Atrial Fibrillation, Patent Foramen Ovale)
- Blood disorders**

Some risk factors **are** not under your control  
See the ones that apply to you

- High blood pressure**
- Heart disease**
- Diabetes**
- High blood cholesterol**
- Being overweight**
- Physical Inactivity**
- Smoking**
- Excessive alcohol consumption**
- Stress**

### Medications

When you have had a stroke or a TIA, medications will help you recover and help to prevent another stroke.

Medications have good effects and possible side effects.

If you have side effects, they usually happen when you begin treatment or when a dose is increased. Most side effects will go away once your body gets used to the medication. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how to manage side effects before you decrease or stop taking prescribed medications.



#### Tips:

- Keep an updated list of your medications in your wallet. Know the names of your medications, the dosage and when you take them
- Take your medication according to the directions on the label.
- Take your medication at the same time each day, such as with breakfast or at bedtime
- Do not stop taking medication without checking with your doctor.
- If you forget to take your medication do not double the dose. Call your pharmacist for directions on what to do.
- If you take medication to lower your blood pressure, sit at the side of the bed and dangle your legs before getting up to avoid feeling dizzy.
- Taking “over-the-counter medications can interact with your prescribed medication. Check with your doctor and pharmacist before taking vitamins, herbal medicine, cough and cold supplements and pain relievers.
- Pill organizers such as pill boxes, dosettes and blister packs can be useful.
- Do not share your medications with anyone else and do not take anyone else’s medications.
- Use the same pharmacy for all your medications

