

# Let's talk about: Stroke



ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL  
COMMUNITY FORUMS

## What is a stroke?

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of blood flow 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.

## Stroke by the Numbers:

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Canada. Six percent of all deaths in Canada are due to stroke.
- More than 50,000 strokes occur in Canada each year. That's one stroke every 10 minutes.
- Each year more than 14,000 Canadians die from stroke. More women than men die from stroke.
- About 300,000 Canadians are living with the effects of stroke.
- After age 55, the risk of stroke doubles every 10 years.
- A stroke survivor has a 20% chance of having another stroke within 2 years.
- Of every 100 people who have a stroke
  - 15 die (15%)
  - 10 recover completely (10%)
  - 25 recover with a minor impairment or disability (25%)
  - 40 are left with a moderate to severe impairment (40%)
  - 10 are so severely disabled they require long-term care (10%)

## Stroke is a medical emergency.

Recognizing and responding **immediately** to the warning signs of stroke by calling

911 or your local emergency number can significantly improve survival and recovery.

## Signs of a stroke (one or more of):

- Loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary.
- Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary.
- Sudden vision problems, even if temporary.
- Sudden severe and unusual headaches.
- Dizziness, especially with any of the above signs.

## Risk Factors You Can't Control

- Age
- Gender
- Family History
- Ethnicity (First Nations, African or South Asian descent)
- History of Stroke or TIA

## Risk Issues You Can Work On

- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Heart disease atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Being overweight
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- An inactive lifestyle
- Smoking
- Stress
- Metabolic syndrome

Source: *The Heart and Stroke Foundation*  
[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

Join medical experts from Providence Health Care for monthly community forums at St. Paul's Hospital. Each month features a different health topic with time to pose questions to the experts.

The forums are free and take place the third Wednesday of every month.

7:00 – 9:00 pm  
(doors open at 6:30)  
New Lecture Theatre  
St. Paul's Hospital  
1081 Burrard Street

For more information and to register, please email [ownyourhealth@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:ownyourhealth@providencehealth.bc.ca) or call 604-806-8495. Light refreshments will be served.

[www.phcmedicine.ca](http://www.phcmedicine.ca)

Sponsored by:



# Stroke treatment and research at St. Paul's Hospital and Rehabilitation at Providence Health Care

A unique provincial resource, Providence Health Care provides complete care for British Columbians with stroke.

Just as important as the high-quality care we provide is our teaching and research mandate that helps us better understand this disease, improve patient care and develop new treatment solutions.

## Highlights of care, research and innovation:

- St. Paul's Hospital treats about 400 patients with stroke symptoms per year and approximately 400 patients are seen at the collaborative stroke clinic every year.
- State-of-the-art brain imaging, blood vessel imaging and treatment with clotbusting drugs and other high tech strategies occurs on a daily basis at St. Paul's Hospital.
- St. Paul's Hospital recently acquired a \$2.2-million, high-definition, low-radiation CT scanner for early stroke detection to enhance diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for patients who have suffered a stroke. This CT scanner has been in use at St. Paul's since January 2009 thanks to the ongoing fundraising efforts of St. Paul's Hospital Foundation.

## Rehabilitation

- Providence Health Care is a major provider of stroke rehabilitation services in the lower mainland and BC.
- Providence Health Care (Holy Family Hospital) in south Vancouver has up to 28 in-patient stroke rehabilitation beds focusing on comprehensive neurorehabilitation for the older stroke patient.
- Providence Health Care provides outpatient/ambulatory comprehensive stroke rehabilitation services.
- Specialized services include our driver rehabilitation program, comprehensive in-patient and outpatient swallowing rehabilitation, and speech and language services.
- The Division of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Providence Health Care reviews inpatients and outpatients throughout the Lower Mainland to identify their specific stroke disability and rehabilitation needs, and provide short and long term follow-up. The Division's areas of interest include orthotics (bracing), pain management, and treatment of spasticity (botulinum toxin)
- With our aging population and the desire to keep ourselves and our families fit and functional in our homes and communities, providing excellent stroke care during the early, subacute, and long term stages will work towards this goal.

St. Paul's Hospital is an acute care, teaching and research hospital located in downtown Vancouver. It is home to many world-class medical and surgical programs, including heart and lung services, HIV/AIDS and kidney care.

St. Paul's serves both the local community and patients from across BC and the Yukon. St. Paul's is one of 14 health care facilities in Vancouver operated by Providence Health Care, one of Canada's largest faith-based health care organizations. Providence's 1,000 physicians and 6,000 staff deliver compassionate care to patients and residents in British Columbia while training medical professionals and making innovative advances in research.

To support programs like this at St. Paul's, please visit [www.helpstpauls.com](http://www.helpstpauls.com)