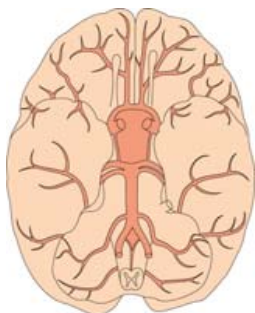


## Department of Neurosciences



# TIA and stroke

Name of patient: \_\_\_\_\_

You have been given some medicines to help reduce the chances of you having another Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)/stroke. You will need to keep taking your medicines, so please arrange a repeat prescription from your GP.

Below is a list of medication you have been prescribed. The name of the medication, dose and what it does is explained below:

Medication name	Dose	What it does
		Helps to keep your blood pressure within safe limits
		Helps to keep your blood thin, so it flows more easily to the brain
		Helps to reduce your cholesterol

Please visit your GP in \_\_\_\_\_ days/ weeks for your repeat prescriptions.

The treatments that you have been given are to help stabilise your condition and prevent you having complications. It is important that you take the medication as prescribed by your doctor or directed by your pharmacist.

You **must not drive** for at least one month after a stroke or TIA.

Appointments will be sent to you for some or all of the following, if required:

- CT or MRI scan- a scan of your brain, to look for signs of stroke/ abnormalities
- Echo cardiogram- a scan of your heart, to look for abnormalities
- 24 hour tape- a 24-hour recording of your heart rhythm, to look for abnormal rhythms

## How to reduce your risk

You can play a big role in reducing your risk of suffering another TIA or stroke and improving your general health, by following the advice below.



## Reduce your salt intake

The recommended amount of salt intake per day is 4.1g (less than a teaspoon) (however the average intake is more than double that, at 9g per day). Too much salt is bad because it increases your blood pressure and hardens your arteries.

To reduce intake:

1. Take the salt off the table and don't add any when you are cooking (one teaspoon contains 5g of salt!).
2. Use herbs and spices to flavour your food.
3. Try not to use processed foods such as ready meals as they contain a lot of salt. Try and cut down on salty snacks, takeaways etc.
4. Fresh fruit and vegetables are thought to help reduce blood pressure.
5. If buying tinned fish and vegetables choose those with no added salt. You can also reduce the salt content by rinsing them in fresh water.

## Cholesterol

Your body makes some of the cholesterol in your blood, the rest comes from what you eat. Some fats produce good cholesterol, others you should avoid. These are shown below:

### Good fats

Monosaturates: Olive oil, non-hydrogenated margarine. Polyunsaturated: sunflower oil, corn oil, soya oil, and fish oils.

## Bad fats

Saturates: Fatty meats, full fat milk, butter, lard etc. Trans fats: Partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.



## How to improve:

- Choose olive oil or non-hydrogenated margarine instead of butter or lard etc.
- Use olive or sunflower oil for frying instead of butter, lard or dripping.
- Have low fat milk products.
- Grill or dry roast meats.

## Smoking

Smokers are up to 20 times more at risk of having a stroke than non-smokers. Smoking makes the blood more likely to clot and increases the hardening and narrowing of the arteries. There is more help than ever available to help you give up the cigarettes. Some GPs run their own smoking cessation clinics. You can also contact the NHS Smoking Helpline 08001690169, or the Quit line 08000 02200.



## Alcohol

Small amounts of alcohol have been shown to help reduce the risk of stroke. However, high levels of alcohol intake or binge drinking can increase the blood pressure, therefore increasing the risk of having a stroke. It can also increase the formation of atherosclerosis, which hardens and narrows the arteries making them more likely to block.

The current recommended levels for safe drinking are a maximum of three to four units a day for men and two to three units a day for women.

One unit is equivalent to half a pint of normal strength beer or cider, a pub measure of a spirit or a small glass of wine.



## Exercise

Exercise can lower the blood pressure, help with weight loss, reduce blood cholesterol, improve blood glucose control for diabetics, help with stress etc. It is one of the easiest ways to dramatically reduce your risk of having further TIAs or a stroke.

This may be easier to achieve than it sounds, current recommendations suggest 30 minutes of moderately intense activity five or more times a week. This means activity that makes you feel warm, but doesn't make you feel so short of breath you can't talk! This activity can include housework, walking, swimming, cycling, carrying shopping and gardening.

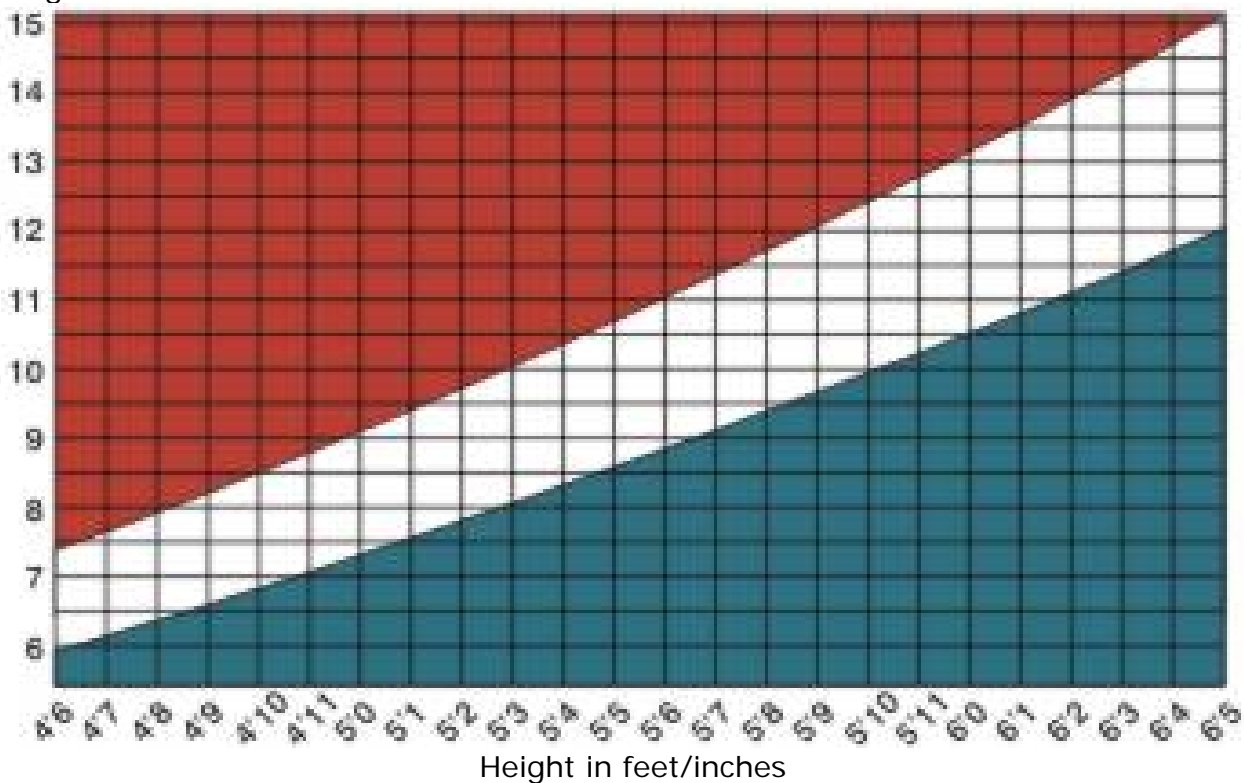
It may be easier to fit in to your busy life than you think, for example, get off the bus one stop earlier or later than usual, use the stairs instead of the lift, walk to the post box instead of driving etc.



### Weight loss

Are you the right weight? Look at the chart below to find your ideal weight. Being too heavy puts extra pressure on your heart and a strain on your whole body.

Weight in stones



- Underweight (BMI < 20)
- Normal weight (BMI 20-25)
- Overweight (BMI > 25)

(BMI is a standardised way of looking at the body fat.)

People who are overweight are putting their body under extra strain. They are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure. If you need to lose weight, set yourself a realistic weight to lose each week (a good target is 2lb per week).

## Diabetes

People with diabetes are at an increased risk of stroke. Uncontrolled or untreated diabetes can damage the blood vessels, causing them to stiffen and narrow due to atherosclerosis. This significantly increases the risk of stroke, especially in those who are also overweight, smoke or aren't physically active.

This can be reduced by:

- Controlling your blood sugar, eating a healthy diet with lots of fresh fruit, vegetables and wholegrain
- Keeping your blood pressure under control and having it checked regularly
- Reducing you cholesterol levels
- Controlling your weight
- Not smoking
- Exercising

## Your goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## For further information contact:

1. Jenny Mitchell (TIA Nurse Specialist) (01223) 245151 Bleep 154 417 or (01223) 217695.
2. The Stroke Association: Telephone: 0845 3033100, website: [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)
3. British Brain and Spine Foundation: Telephone: 0808 808 1000, website: [www.brainandspine.org.uk](http://www.brainandspine.org.uk)



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

## Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



## Document history

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