

## Pediatric Stroke

A child has a stroke when a part of the brain can't get the oxygen and blood that it needs. Without blood supply, brain tissue cannot survive. For this reason, quick response is needed.

### What are some risk factors for stroke in children?

- Congenital heart disease
- Diseases affecting the arteries of the brain
- Infection
- Head or neck trauma
- Sickle cell disease
- Autoimmune disorders
- Blood clotting problems
- No previous risk factor is found in about half of stroke cases
- If a child has had a stroke, they may have a greater risk for another stroke

### What does a stroke look like in a child?

If your child has any of the signs listed below, **call 911** right away.

- Sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body, face, arm or leg
- Sudden trouble walking, loss of balance or coordination, or dizziness
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding others
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden severe headache, especially with vomiting and sleepiness
- New onset of seizure, usually on one side of the body

The signs of a stroke in a child can be hard to pick out. Talk to your doctor or nurse about your concerns.

### My child had a stroke. What now?

What to expect largely depends on the cause of the stroke, the size of the damage, and the type of stroke. Many children who survive strokes may develop:

- Seizures
- Problems with sensation, movement and swallowing

Your child may develop long-term effects like:

- Trouble with mood changes
- Trouble with language and learning

After a stroke, your child's needs may change as they grow. Getting help early will be very important in helping your child's progress. Your child's doctor can tell you how often your child will need to be seen. You will need a plan to make certain your child takes any medicines that have been ordered. Your child will need help from a speech, physical, or occupational therapist.

It is a comfort to many parents to know that children can often regain much of their normal function.

Pediatric strokes can be scary for the whole family. Be sure to ask your doctor about any questions you or your child may have. Your health care team is there to help.

### For Further Support

American Heart Association and American Stroke Association websites:

<http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/> and search "pediatric stroke"

Children's Hemiplegia and Stroke Association, CHASA:

<http://www.chasa.org/>

Kids Have Strokes:

<http://www.kidshavestrokes.org/>

Pediatric Stroke Network:

<http://www.pediatricstrokenetwork.com/>

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7136