

About  
**stroke**  
and the Swedish  
**Stroke**  
Association

Information in English from  
Strokeförbundet



# Strokeförbundet

The Swedish stroke association, Strokeförbundet, is a non-profit and independent organization that covers all of Sweden and includes people affected by stroke, their families and others.

The aims and objectives of Strokeförbundet are:

- to take care for the interests of people affected by stroke and their families
- to inform about the consequences of being hit by stroke and what it might lead to
- to campaign for better treatment and care by promoting better education for personnel treating stroke patients
- to improve social security
- to improve the follow-up treatment by primary health care after leaving the hospital
- to help establish more local stroke organizations
- to promote awareness and understanding of stroke by our politicians and in the society in general.

## The stroke fund

Strokeförbundet is also in charge of Strokefonden. Strokefonden is a fund for "supporting stroke research and spread information about stroke". Every year the fund is providing grants to stroke research.

**Donate to the stroke fund!**

Swish: 900 53 07

bg. 900 - 5307 tel: 0200 88 31 31

[www.strokefonden.se](http://www.strokefonden.se)

# What is stroke?

A stroke is an acute vascular injury of the brain which occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a blood clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, so it starts to die.

Ischaemic stroke is caused by clots blocking a blood vessel. This is the most common stroke, accounting for 85% of all strokes.

Haemorrhagic stroke is caused by a bleeding into the brain tissue or by a ruptured blood vessel (aneurysm) and accounts 15 % of all strokes.

Transient ischaemic attack (TIA) is a major risk factor for having an ischaemic stroke. This means that the person who have had a TIA should see a doctor immediately.

Did you know that in every 20 minutes someone is affected by stroke, about 25 000 people every year. 20% of those are under 65 years old. Both men and women are equally affected by stroke. Approximately 80 million people in the world lives with the consequences of stroke. So it's safe to say it's a global health problem.

A stroke is psychologically and physically so severe that one must have experienced it to understand it fully. However, it's not just the stroke survivor that could be in need of support. When you had a stroke the whole family is affected in many different ways. To look for support among your extended family, friends, health care and your local stroke organization can be of great help along the way.

# Symptoms of stroke

In most cases the symptoms appear suddenly, but they may appear in stages during a period of several hours.

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Trouble seeing with one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness
- Severe headache with no known cause

If you feel any of the symptoms listed above you can do the stroke self-check test. It's called AKUT-test in Swedish.

AKUT stands for:

**A** (Ansikte - Face) Try to smile, does one side of the face drop?

**K** (Kroppsdelen - Body part) Are you able to raise both of your arms or does one drop?

**U** (Uttal - Speech) Can you repeat a simple phrase or is your speech slurred or strange?

**T** (Tid - Time) If you observe any of these signs, call 112 immediately.



# Consequences after stroke

- Consequences after stroke can vary according to the severity of the damage, as well as the actual location of the stroke
- Disabilities after stroke can be both physical, cognitive (intellectual), psycho-social and emotional. Some of these may be clearly visible, others not

## Treatment

- Immediate admission to hospital and treatment at a stroke unit
- Medication or drug therapy
- Post stroke rehabilitation

## Prevention

- Treating hypertension
- Stop smoking
- Reduce cholesterol
- Get diabetes under control
- Eat healthy
- Exercise regularly
- A diet rich in fruit and vegetables



## Risk factors

Stroke is a disease often caused by advanced age. No, we can't do anything about our age, but there are other things we can do to reduce the risk of stroke:

High blood pressure, smoking, heart diseases, diabetes and high cholesterol are high risk factors. However a **sedentary** lifestyle, **inappropriate** nutrition and **stress** also increase the risk of stroke. A healthy life style is a good way to beat stroke.

## We know:

- There is treatment for those who have had a stroke
- The faster the treatment starts, the better the prognosis
- Rehabilitation by therapists is effective and needed. The outcome of the rehabilitation depends on you. It requires continuous exercise.

At Strokeförbundet we know what it takes, and we are here to help you and to share our experience with you

## Education in stroke competencies

Strokeförbundet has initiated an education programme to stimulate knowledge and learning about stroke, with the aim of raising the quality of health care for stroke patients. The classes are intended for all professions working with stroke patients such as doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists. The stroke competencies education programme stretches over a year.

## Aid from society

The municipality has the responsibility to give support and care to those in need, such as; rehabilitation, home care, special accommodation and more. The Social Services Act (Sol) and The Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) are the two acts that guarantees good living conditions for people in need. But there are different criteria for what help you are entitled to, which is specified in the acts. To know more about the acts and what help you might get, please contact your local municipality office.

## Become a member!

When you apply for membership in Strokeförbundet you will also automatically become a member in the nearest local Stroke-organization in your area of Sweden. The local organizations are widely spread from the north to the south.

Members of Strokeförbundet will receive our magazine StrokeKontakt four times a year, as well as a free copy each of our various published brochures (in Swedish).

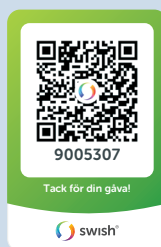
Our local organizations host different activities for our members, such as meetings, social events, educational gatherings, rehabilitation classes, excursions and other organized travel. Becoming an active member is also a great way to connect with other people who are sharing the same experiences and who might be able to support and help you. Having a strong member community means the chances of putting pressure on politicians and forming opinion to promote stroke awareness are much higher.

If you want to know more, or become a member of Strokeförbundet, please contact us or one of our local organizations. You will find contact information on the last page.



## Stöd Strokefonden!

[www.strokefonden.se](http://www.strokefonden.se)



tel: 08 - 721 88 20

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[www.strokeforbundet.se](http://www.strokeforbundet.se)

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