

## The Miriam Hospital's Stroke Center

The Miriam Hospital



**The Miriam Hospital**  
*A Lifespan Partner*

164 Summit Avenue  
Providence, RI 02906

MiriamHospital.org

“The stroke team at  
**The Miriam Hospital**  
**saved my life** after what  
could have been a deadly  
stroke. The physicians utilized  
cutting-edge medical  
procedures and seamlessly  
worked together to take  
advantage of every  
treatable second. **Because**  
**of their expertise and**  
**care**, I am on my way to a full  
recovery. **It is truly a miracle.”**

*- Joseph Brissette*

*We're Here to Care.*

Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the number one cause of long-term disability in the United States. Approximately 700,000 Americans will have a stroke this year; that's someone every 45 seconds.

## Types of Stroke

**Ischemic stroke** accounts for about 83 percent of all cases. Ischemic strokes occur as a result of an obstruction within a blood vessel supplying blood to the brain.

**Hemorrhagic stroke** accounts for about 17 percent of stroke cases. It results from a weakened blood vessel that ruptures and bleeds into the surrounding brain.

**Transient ischemic attacks**, also called TIAs, are minor or warning strokes. In a TIA, conditions indicative of an ischemic stroke are present and the typical stroke warning signs develop. However, the obstruction (blood clot) occurs for a short time and tends to resolve itself through normal mechanisms. Even though the symptoms disappear after a short time, TIAs are strong indicators of a possible major stroke. Steps should be taken immediately to prevent a stroke.

## Symptoms of Stroke

The Miriam Hospital's emergency department sees about 10 stroke patients each week. On average, nine hours have passed between the first symptoms of stroke and the patient's arrival at the ED. Some people don't understand they're having symptoms, some may experience subtle symptoms, while others hope the symptoms will disappear with time. Nine hours

is too long to wait. By then, treatment options have narrowed and full recovery is less likely. If people seek treatment within three hours of the first onset of symptoms, physicians have more options to fight strokes.

The vast majority of strokes are caused by clots that block blood flow to the brain. Thirty years ago, medical science was unable to dislodge or dissolve the blockage, but effective treatments are now available. For patients who meet treatment criteria, today's options include aggressive medical, surgical and radiological responses, including clot-busting drugs that can dissolve a clot before any lasting damage occurs. The key is time: the earlier you get to the emergency department, the more treatment options are available and the greater the likelihood that you will not suffer lasting effects of the stroke.

**Call 911 immediately if you experience one or more of the warning signs of stroke:**

- sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- sudden difficulty seeing in one or both eyes, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, sudden severe headache with no known cause

## Risk Factors

There are several factors that increase your risk of stroke. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of having a stroke.

Although risk factors like your age, family health history and gender can't be controlled, others, such as your amount of physical activity and decision to smoke, can be modified.

**You are at a greater risk of having a stroke if you:**

- Are 55 or older
- Have a family history of stroke
- Have had a stroke
- Have high blood pressure
- Smoke
- Have diabetes
- Have heart and/or vascular disease
- Have an increase in your red blood cell count
- Are overweight
- Are not physically active

There are simple ways to reduce your risk of suffering a stroke.

**You can reduce your risk if you:**

- Don't smoke
- Don't abuse alcohol or drugs
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Pay attention to the warning signs of stroke

## Our Services

- Rhode Island's first *Certified Stroke Center*: clinicians experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of stroke, who are available around-the-clock for stroke emergencies
- The latest in diagnostic imaging equipment to accurately detect stroke and its complications
- Minimally invasive delivery of care using the newest therapies, such as clot-dissolving medication and the Merci Retrieval device
- An intensive care unit coordinated with the stroke team for supporting treated patients
- Trained nurses dedicated to caring for stroke patients
- Rehabilitation specialists committed to helping survivors regain a comfortable quality of life
- A multi-specialty Stroke Committee reviews patient care and outcomes monthly

## Rehabilitation

After suffering a stroke, it's important to begin rehabilitation as soon as possible. Rehabilitation helps survivors:

- Regain body functions they lost to stroke
- Cope with disabilities and depression caused by stroke
- Learn skills to resume daily routines and re-enter the workforce

Various types of rehabilitation specialists work with stroke survivors:

- **Physician** – the primary care physician or neurologist tracks a patient's health and oversees his or her progress in rehabilitation

- **Rehabilitation nurse** – the nurse works with the physician to ensure the recovery of functions after a stroke
- **Physical therapist** – helps the survivor regain functional mobility, such as ambulation (walking), and maximize independence
- **Speech therapist** – helps the survivor overcome speech or language impairments caused by stroke
- **Occupational therapist** – helps the survivor improve cognitive function and maximize independence, allowing him or her to perform everyday functional activities, such as eating and personal grooming
- **Psychiatrist** – helps the survivor cope with the depression and disabilities caused by stroke

## Contact Us

For more information on the Stroke Center at The Miriam Hospital, please visit our website at [miriamhospital.org](http://miriamhospital.org).

## A certified Stroke Center



The Miriam Hospital is the first hospital in Rhode Island to be designated a Certified Stroke Center by The Joint Commission (TJC). The certification, referred to as the Gold Seal

of Approval™, shows that the hospital's stroke program meets TJC's rigorous new standards and performance measurements in caring for stroke patients and offering state-of-the-art treatments. The Joint Commission's stroke center certification is based on the recommendations for primary stroke centers published by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association's statements and national guidelines for stroke care.