



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Transient Ischemic Attack: After Your Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

You have had a transient ischemic attack (TIA). This means that the blood flow to a part of your brain was blocked for a short time. A TIA is like a stroke but usually lasts only a few minutes. Any vision problems, slurred speech, or other symptoms usually go away within 10 to 20 minutes.

TIA's do not cause lasting brain damage, but they are often warning signs of a stroke. About one-third of the people who have a TIA may have a stroke in the future. Think of your TIA as a serious warning. You can take steps now to help prevent a stroke in the future.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Do not smoke. People who smoke have a higher risk of stroke than those who quit. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in cholesterol, saturated fat, and salt. Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables and foods high in fiber.
- If your doctor recommends it, get more exercise. Walking is a good choice. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk every day. Try for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. You also may want to swim, bike, or do other activities. Regular exercise lowers your chance of stroke.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women. Too much alcohol can cause health problems.

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- Work with your doctor to control high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and other conditions that increase your chance of a stroke. A healthy diet, exercise, weight loss (if needed), and medicines can help.

Medicines

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You may be taking several medicines. ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors, beta-blockers, angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs), diuretics (water pills), and calcium channel blockers control your blood pressure. Statins help lower cholesterol.
- Your doctor may advise you to take aspirin every day. Aspirin prevents blood clots, and many studies have shown that it helps prevent strokes in people who have had a TIA.
- If your doctor has given you medicine that prevents blood clots, such as warfarin (Coumadin), aspirin combined with extended-release dipyridamole (Aggrenox), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin to prevent a stroke, you should:
 - Tell your dentist, pharmacist, and other health professionals that you take these medicines.
 - Watch for unusual bruising or bleeding, such as blood in your urine, red or black stools, or bleeding from your nose or gums.
 - Get regular blood tests to check your clotting time, if you are taking Coumadin.
 - Wear medical alert jewelry that says you take blood thinners. You can buy this at most drugstores.
- Call your doctor if you are not able to take your medicines for any reason.
- Do not take any over-the-counter medicines or herbal products without talking to your doctor first.
- If you take birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy, talk to your doctor about whether they are right for you.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have signs of a stroke. These may include:
 - Sudden numbness, paralysis, or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, especially on only one side of your body.

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- New problems with walking or balance.
- Sudden vision changes.
- Drooling or slurred speech.
- New problems speaking or understanding simple statements, or you feel confused.
- A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches.

Call 911 even if these symptoms go away in a few minutes.

- You feel like you are having another TIA.
- You cough up blood.
- You vomit blood or what looks like coffee grounds.
- You pass maroon or very bloody stools.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new bruises or blood spots under your skin.
- You have a nosebleed.
- Your gums bleed when you brush your teeth.
- You have blood in your urine.
- Your stools are black and tarlike or have streaks of blood.
- You have vaginal bleeding when you are not having your period, or heavy period bleeding.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter I231 in the search box to learn more about **"Transient Ischemic Attack: After Your Visit"**.

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