

TIA – Transient Ischaemic Attack

What is a TIA?

A transient ischaemic attack is often called a “mini stroke” or mild stroke. The symptoms are very similar to those of a full-blown stroke but they last for less than 24 hours (most TIAs last for 10-20 minutes).

A TIA should never be ignored. It is a sign that part of the brain is not getting enough blood and there is a risk of serious stroke. TIAs are an emergency and need urgent medical attention and assessment.

What Causes a TIA ?

There are a number of large blood vessels on either side of the neck which carry blood up to the head. They divide into smaller blood vessels which carry blood to all parts of the brain.

A TIA can occur if a blood clot or other debris temporarily clogs one of these tiny vessels, causing a temporary disruption to the blood supply to nearby brain cells. Permanent disruption to the blood supply may result in a stroke.

Very rarely, symptoms of a TIA are due to bleeding in the brain (haemorrhage).

What is the treatment ?

The doctor will prescribe you aspirin immediately. Clopidogrel may be prescribed if you are unable to tolerate aspirin or if you have had a TIA whilst already taking aspirin. If you are taking the blood thinning drug warfarin you will have regular blood tests to ensure the dosage is correct.

Will I need to see a specialist ?

The emergency department will arrange for you to see a specialist within a week of you attending; you will be contacted by the TIA clinic so that they can arrange for you to be seen in their clinic (not the emergency department). The result of the blood tests, heart tracing and blood pressure measurements will be discussed with you at this appointment. You may require further tests including a head scan and possibly a scan of the blood vessels in the neck.

What can I do to prevent another attack ?

Taking your medication regularly can help prevent further episodes of TIA, in-addition you stop smoking (this causes the blood vessels to narrow and the blood to thicken) and avoid binge drinking of alcohol. The recommended daily limits for adults are 2 to 3 units a day for women and 3 to 4 for men (a glass of wine is between 2 and 3 units, a single measure of spirit is 1 unit and half a pint of normal strength (4%) beer or lager is 1 unit).

Can I drive after a TIA ?

The DVLA (Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency) has strict guidelines about who may and may not drive.

You are not allowed to drive for at least one month after a stroke or TIA and always need a doctor's approval to resume driving.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day. If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:
Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>
www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department (A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11 6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743