

Cerebral Vasospasm: What You Need to Know

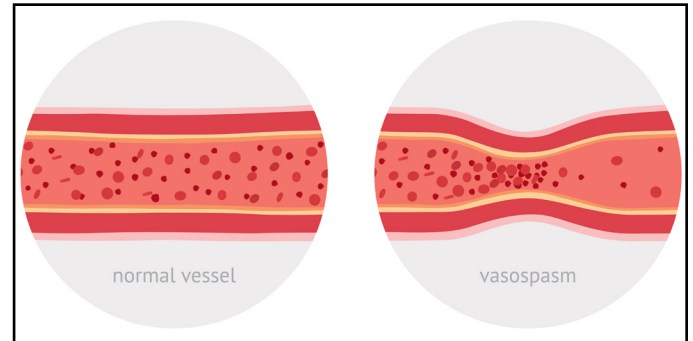
Brain Bleed

A brain bleed (subarachnoid hemorrhage) is a type of stroke. It happens when a blood vessel inside of your brain bursts.

Blood leaks into the space between the brain and the middle membrane that covers it (known as the subarachnoid space, shown in dark red in the drawing).



When a blood vessel becomes weak and bulges, it can burst and bleed. This is known as a hemorrhagic stroke.



(Left) A normal blood vessel. (Right) Vasospasm causes the blood vessels inside your brain to narrow. This means that part of your brain isn't getting the oxygen-rich blood it should.

A vasospasm may last up to 3 weeks or longer. Your highest risk for a vasospasm is 7 to 14 days after the brain bleed.

Cerebral Vasospasm

Having a brain bleed puts you at risk of having vasospasm. The blood vessels inside your brain tighten (narrow). This causes decreased blood flow to an area of the brain.

If it is left untreated, vasospasm could lead to a stroke, disability, or both.

Symptoms

A vasospasm can cause changes such as:

- inability to move one side of your body
- difficulty with speech or communication
- changes in alertness (level of consciousness)
- severe headache and other signs of stroke.

Diagnosis

Your doctor will confirm a vasospasm by using tests. You may have one or more.

☐ Neurological exam

- This is a physical exam of your nervous system. It includes checking your strength, reflexes, coordination, gait (walk), and speech, among others.

☐ Transcranial Doppler ultrasound

- This test uses sound waves to look at the blood flow in your brain.
- It may be done while you are in your bed.

(over)

❑ Computed tomography (CT) or computed tomography angiography (CTA)

- CT or CTA uses X-ray and a computer to get an in-depth look at your brain, tissues, blood vessels and bones.
- The result is an image that provides a clear and detailed picture of your brain.

❑ Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or Magnetic resonance angiography (MRA)

- MRI or MRA uses a magnetic field to get a 3-D view of your brain.
- This scan can give information about the tissues and blood flow within your brain.

❑ Cerebral angiography

- This is a special X-ray of the blood vessels using contrast.

Treatment

Your doctor will use the right treatment for you which may include:


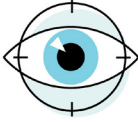




- medicines to open your blood vessels
- medicines to raise your blood pressure
- giving you fluids
- having a cerebral angiogram.

Care After Your Hospital Stay

- Take your medicines as directed.
- Follow any lifestyle changes your doctor recommends.
- Keep **all** follow-up appointments with your health care providers.

When to Call 911

Call 911 if you **any** stroke symptoms.
(See the BE FAST box on the other side.)

	B	Balance – Sudden difficulty with balance
	E	Eyes – Sudden problems with vision in one or both eyes
	F	Face – Face or smile droops on one side
	A	Arms – Sudden weakness in arm or leg
	S	Speech – Unable to repeat a simple sentence, or slurred words
	T	Time – If you observe any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately

BE FAST was developed by Intermountain Healthcare, as an adaptation of the FAST model implemented by the American Stroke Association. Reproduced with permission from Intermountain Healthcare. Copyright 2011, Intermountain Health Care.

Get medical help right away if you have any signs of stroke.