


 <h1>Choosing Wisely[®]</h1> <p><i>An initiative of the ABIM Foundation</i></p>	
	 <p>American Association of Neurological Surgeons</p>
	 
	

Preventing seizures after an ischemic stroke

When you need medicine—and when you don't

An ischemic (iss-keem-ik) stroke is the most common type of stroke. A blood vessel gets blocked so that it can't send blood to a part of the brain. This injures the brain and can cause a seizure.

A seizure causes:

- Involuntary body movements.
- Strange sensations.
- Blackouts.

Some doctors routinely prescribe anti-seizure medicine after an ischemic stroke. But this treatment is not usually necessary. And the medicine may do more harm than good. Here's why:

Anti-seizure medicine won't help.

There's no evidence that taking anti-seizure medicine after an ischemic stroke will prevent a seizure or help you recover.

If you don't have a seizure right after the stroke, you probably won't have one. The medicine isn't necessary.



The medicine has side effects.

Anti-seizure medicines can have unpleasant side effects, including:

- Allergic reactions
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Dulled senses (feeling foggy)
- Problems with concentration, attention, and focus

The medicine can be expensive.

The costs of these medicines vary a lot, depending on your insurance. You can pay from \$15 to \$700 for a 30-day supply.

When do you need anti-seizure medicine after a stroke?

The medicine may be helpful if you have already had a seizure after an ischemic stroke. The medicine may help prevent a second seizure.



Advice from Consumer Reports

Steps you can take to prevent stroke

Keep blood pressure under control. Have it checked at least every two years, more often after age 50. If it's high, lower it with medicine and lifestyle changes.

Lower cholesterol if it's too high. Try lifestyle changes like those below, or talk to your doctor about taking a statin drug.

Manage diabetes. If you're at risk for type 2 diabetes, get a blood sugar test every three to five years. If you have diabetes, try to keep blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels normal.

Consider low-dose aspirin. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits.

Have your doctor check your pulse for atrial fibrillation, a heart-rhythm problem. It can increase the risk of blood clots and stroke.

Follow a brain-healthy diet. Eat less than 1,500 mg of salt a day ($\frac{2}{3}$ teaspoon). Eat potassium-rich fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and lean protein.

Get regular exercise. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise (like brisk walking or cycling) five days a week. Strength training can also help.

Watch your waist. Aim for under 40 inches for men, and 35 for women. Keep body mass index (BMI) under 25. Check BMI at ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BMI.

Limit alcohol to two drinks a day for men, and one drink a day for women.

Quit smoking. Or don't start.

This report is for you to use when talking with your health-care provider. It is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment. Use of this report is at your own risk.

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