

# What is a stroke?

Lisa Skibba, For Daily Tribune Media 12:50 p.m. CDT July 19, 2015



(Photo: Contributed)

A stroke, also known as a brain attack or cerebral vascular accident (CVA), occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted. There are two main kinds of stroke:

- An ischemic stroke occurs when an artery is obstructed by atherosclerotic plaques and eventually blocks blood flow to the brain
- A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when there is a bleed into the brain or its coverings

In either type of stroke, brain cells are killed in the immediate area, known as the area of infarct, as well as some of the surrounding tissue. The severity of the stroke is determined by the size of the brain that lost circulation and the area of the brain affected.

Strokes can affect sensory systems (touch, sensation), motor systems (movement), cognition (thinking and memory), balance and coordination, speech, or personality. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. It is estimated that 700,000 people suffer a stroke annually — a rate of one person every 45 seconds. The majority of stroke patients are left with residual physical disabilities that make ordinary daily tasks very difficult.

Rehabilitation of a stroke patient may involve evaluation by a physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech therapist.

Treatments are initiated to address specific deficits. Treatments begin in the hospital and can transition to a nursing home. Many patients then return to their homes and need to continue outpatient rehabilitation therapy to maximize function.

Riverview Rehabilitation has staff trained in the rehabilitation of neurological disorders including strokes, head injuries, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

Our therapists use traditional therapies, including strengthening and neuro-developmental training. Our program also incorporates some of the latest advancements in neurological treatment, including:

- WalkAide: a neuro-stimulator for foot drop
- Biodex Unweighing System: to improve the quality and speed of walking
- Biodex Balance System: to improve balance and weight shift
- SaeboFlex Splint Program: to maximize upper extremity function

Our goal for a patient is always to maximize function to make activities of daily living as independent as possible.

Even if you see a doctor somewhere else, you can request to have your physical, occupational or speech therapy with Riverview Rehabilitation. With three locations in the greater Wisconsin Rapids area, you don't have to travel far. Riverview offers rehabilitation services in the following convenient locations:

- Riverview Rehabilitation Center, 1041 Hill Street, Wisconsin Rapids.
- Riverview Family Clinic Nekoosa, 1015 Angelus Drive, Nekoosa.
- Riverview Family Clinic Lakes, 1160 Rome Center Drive, town of Rome.

All the services offered by Riverview Rehabilitation are available with a doctor's referral. To schedule an appointment for an evaluation, please call Riverview Rehabilitation Center at 715-424-8500.

*Lisa Skibba, PT, is Riverview Director of Rehabilitation Services.*