

## Stroke-causing clot treatable

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**Question:** How do doctors treat the blood clots that cause stroke?

**Answer:** Strokes that are caused by blood clots are called ischemic strokes.



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There are several ways to treat the blood clots — but the primary goal is to get rid of the clot so that blood flow can be restored to the brain. How this is accomplished may depend upon where the clot is in the brain, the patient's symptoms, the length of time since the stroke began and

other factors.

Patients with ischemic strokes may be given Tissue Plasminogen Activator, a powerful drug that dissolves clots and can reduce the chances of permanent disability. A neurological expert must determine that it is appropriate to give tPA and it must be administered within 4.5 hours of experiencing stroke symptoms.

In some cases, it's necessary to actually remove the clot, rather than dissolve it. At

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Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center, our Primary Stroke Center has minimally invasive technology called the Merci Retrieval System that enables trained interventional radiologists to remove blood clots from the brain.

This is done by inserting a "balloon guide catheter" into an artery in the groin and maneuvering it up an artery in the neck. A microcatheter is then threaded through the guide catheter into the blocked brain artery. Next, special instruments are deployed through the guide catheter to wrap around the clot. The balloon guide catheter then is inflated so the clot can be pulled into the catheter and drawn outside the body.

These treatments for acute stroke can mean a better chance of recovery with fewer disabilities.

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