

TIA Treatment Guidelines Handout

Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) are critical warning signs of impending stroke and require prompt evaluation and management to prevent further neurological damage.

Treatment options

There are several treatment options available for individuals who have experienced a TIA. These can include lifestyle changes, medications, and surgical interventions:

Lifestyle changes

Lifestyle modifications are an important aspect of treating TIAs and preventing further attacks or stroke. These changes may include:

- **Quitting smoking:** Smoking is a major risk factor for TIAs and strokes, as it can damage blood vessels and increase the likelihood of blood clots.
- **Maintaining a healthy weight:** Obesity increases the risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and other conditions that can contribute to TIAs and strokes.
- **Regular exercise:** Physical activity can help lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk of heart disease, all of which can decrease the likelihood of TIAs and strokes.
- **Eating a healthy diet:** A diet that is low in saturated fat, trans fat, and salt while being rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help manage underlying conditions that may lead to TIAs and strokes.

Medications

Several types of medications may be used to treat or prevent TIAs. These include:

- **Antiplatelet agents:** These medications, such as aspirin and clopidogrel, work by preventing blood clots from forming in the arteries. They are often prescribed for individuals who have experienced a TIA to reduce their risk of stroke.
- **Anticoagulants:** Similar to antiplatelets, anticoagulants also prevent blood clots but work by thinning the blood. These medications may be recommended for individuals with certain conditions that increase their risk of stroke, such as atrial fibrillation.
- **Blood pressure medications:** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for TIAs and strokes. Medications like ACE inhibitors or diuretics may be prescribed to help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of future TIAs.
- **Cholesterol-lowering medications:** Elevated levels of cholesterol can contribute to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, increasing the risk of stroke. Statins are commonly used to lower cholesterol levels and prevent future TIAs or strokes.

Surgery

- **Carotid endarterectomy:** This surgical procedure involves removing plaque buildup from the carotid arteries in the neck. It is typically recommended for individuals with severe blockages in their carotid arteries, which can increase the risk of TIAs and strokes.
- **Angioplasty and stenting:** In this procedure, a small tube called a catheter is inserted into a narrowed artery and a balloon-like device is used to widen the artery. A stent (a small mesh tube) may also be placed in the artery to help keep it open.