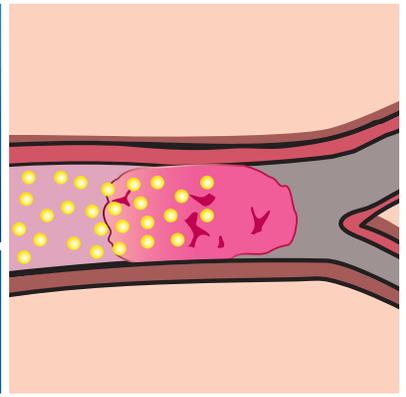


# Treating a stroke with medication

## Thrombolysis

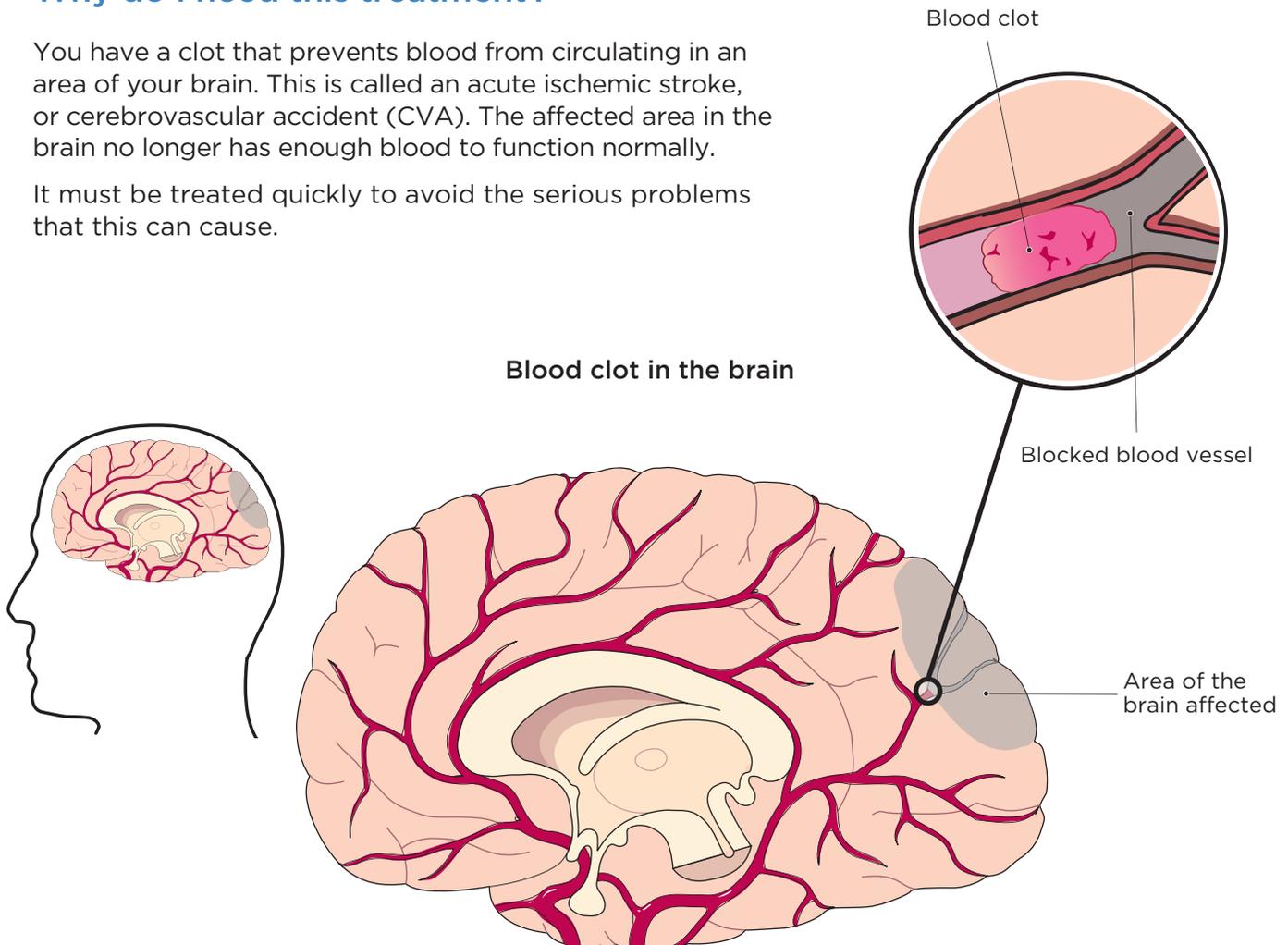


You will soon receive or have just received medication to destroy a blood clot in a vessel of your brain. This treatment is called thrombolysis. This fact sheet describes how the treatment works and what to do next.

### Why do I need this treatment?

You have a clot that prevents blood from circulating in an area of your brain. This is called an acute ischemic stroke, or cerebrovascular accident (CVA). The affected area in the brain no longer has enough blood to function normally.

It must be treated quickly to avoid the serious problems that this can cause.

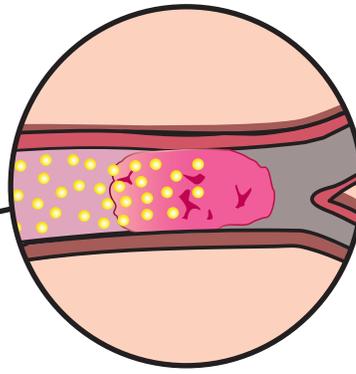
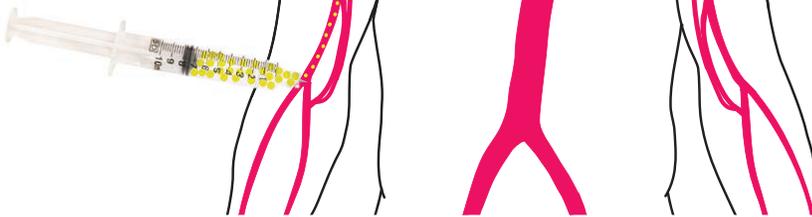


## How does this treatment work?

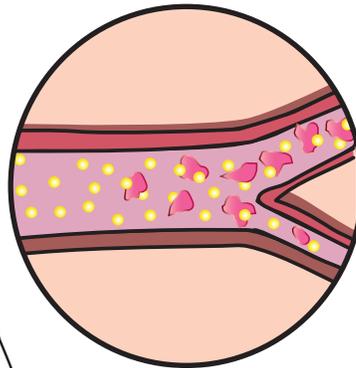
A drug called Alteplase will be used to destroy the clot. This is called thrombolysis. This treatment is not painful.

### Steps of the procedure

**1** The medication is injected into a vein.



**2** The medication flows through the blood stream to get to the clot.



**3** The medication “breaks down” the clot into small pieces that will be eliminated along with other blood waste products.

## What are the risks associated with this treatment?

Possible risks are:

- bleeding (hemorrhage): in the brain, urine, nose, stomach, intestines, or elsewhere
- allergic reaction to the drug (swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat, which can lead to problems with breathing or swallowing)

If any of these things happen, your care team will immediately take measures to treat the problem.

## Are there contra-indications to this treatment?

This treatment cannot be done if:

- the symptoms have been present for too long
- you have a stroke that is not caused by a clot, but rather by a blood build-up in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke)
- your blood pressure is high despite treatment to lower it
- your risk of bleeding is too high

## What does the treatment involve?

There are three steps:

- 1** Exams (maximum 30 minutes): blood test, weight measurement, brain scan, examination of heart activity (electrocardiogram or echocardiogram).
- 2** Injection of the drug (1 hour).
- 3** 24 to 48 hours of monitoring, which begins during treatment. A care team regularly monitors your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing, temperature, etc.). They are also checking your neurological condition.

## What does the care team do AFTER the procedure?

- They will take you to a room where you can continue to recover, either in the Stroke Unit or the Intensive Care Unit.
- The care team will regularly monitor your condition and your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing, temperature, etc.); they will also check to make sure you are able to urinate and move your bowels.
- They will check to see how well you are able to swallow. See the brochure [\*Detecting problems with swallowing\*](#).
- They will inform your doctor if there is any change in your health condition.
- They will check to make sure you are comfortable.
- They will respond to any questions or needs for support that you or your family might have.
- The team will make a plan with you for follow-up care and treatments.

## Are there any precautions to take AFTER the procedure?

### You must:

- > not get up at all for 24 hours
- > ask the care team for help to change position or to get out of bed when you can stand up
- > eat and drink according to the care team's instructions
- > follow instructions about restarting your personal hygiene activities or walking in the bedroom or corridor
- > call a nurse immediately if you notice any of the following signs:
  - sudden headache
  - trouble breathing
  - trouble swallowing
  - swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat
  - nausea or vomiting



### Medications

If you were taking medications before (for diabetes, blood pressure, clotting, etc.), your doses may be changed.

You may also be given new medications to take. If so, the neurologist and the nurse will tell you.



## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

You can speak to any member of your health care team. Do not hesitate to do so.

When you are at home, you can call your doctor or any member of the care team following you after your hospitalization.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

Heart and Stroke Foundation:  
> [heartandstroke.ca](http://heartandstroke.ca)

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site  
[chumontreal.qc.ca/votresante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/votresante)



## NOTEPAD



### Questions

Write down any questions you want to ask your care team so you don't forget anything.






### Observations - Comments

Write down observations you feel are important : your symptoms, treatments, follow-up, energy level, spirit, etc.




*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

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