

Priority Topic: **STROKE**

Key Features:

For a single source of info on this topic: [Australian Stroke Guidelines 2010](#)

1. In patients presenting with symptoms and/or signs suggestive of stroke, [include other diagnoses in the differential diagnosis](#) (e.g., transient ischemic attack [TIA], brain tumour, hypoglycemia, subdural hematoma, subarachnoid bleed).

What you should study:

- ✓ [Diagnosis of Acute Stroke AAFP 2015](#) **Especially Table 4: Stroke Mimics**

2. In a patient presenting with a stroke, [differentiate, if possible, hemorrhagic from embolic/thrombotic stroke](#) (e.g., through the history, physical examination, and ancillary testing, such as scanning and electrocardiography), as treatment differs.

What you should study:

There are studies on differentiating clinical features of hemorrhagic vs ischemic stroke but it is not straightforward.

- ✓ [Clinical Manifestation of HS vs IS 2017](#)
- ✓ [Risk factors for IS vs HS](#)

3. Assess patients presenting with neurologic deficits in a timely fashion, to determine their [eligibility for thrombolysis](#).

What you should study:

- ✓ [Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for tPA AHA/ASA 2015](#)
- ✓ [Acute Ischemic Stroke Early management ASA/AHA 2018](#)

4. In a patient diagnosed with stroke, [involve other professionals](#) as needed (e.g., a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, social service personnel, a physiatrist, a neurologist) to ensure the best outcome for the patient.

✓ **Just do it!**

5. When caring for a stroke patient with severe/serious deficits, [involve the patient and her or his family](#) in [decisions about intervention](#) (e.g., resuscitation, use of a feeding tube, treatment of pneumonia).

✓ **Just do it!**

6. In patients who have suffered stroke, diagnose [“silent” cognitive deficits](#) (not associated with sensory or motor symptoms or signs, such as inattention and impulsivity) when they are present.

What you should study:

Remember to look for cognitive deficits in EVERY patient who has suffered a stroke. Depression post-stroke is also an important factor and associated with higher mortality.

- ✓ [Post-Stroke Memory Deficits 2017](#)
- ✓ [Post-Stroke Depression AHA/ASA 2016](#)

7. Provide **realistic prognostic advice** about their disabilities to stroke patients and their families. **This is realistically very difficult and will probably require a collaborative approach with the treating neurologist.**

What you should study:

- ✓ [NIH Stroke Score \(NIHSS one page\)](#)
- ✓ [Predicting Motor Recovery Post-Stroke 2014 BILINGUAL](#) article that reviews some prediction models for post-stroke prognostication

8. In stroke patients with disabilities, **evaluate the resources and supports** needed to improve function (e.g., a cane, a walker, home care).

What you should study:

- ✓ [Resources post-stroke](#) This is a lovely ppt outlining post-stroke community resources in Ontario - just to give you some ideas.

9. In the continuing care of **stroke patients with deficits** (e.g., dysphagia, being bedridden), include the **prevention of certain complications** (e.g., aspiration pneumonia, decubitus ulcer) in the treatment plan, as they are more common.

What you should study:

- ✓ [Post-Stroke Care Checklist AHA/ASA 2014](#)

10. In patients at risk of stroke, **treat modifiable risk factors** (e.g., atrial fibrillation, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and hypertension). **ie: PRIMARY prevention**

What you should study:

- ✓ [AHA/ASA primary stroke prevention guideline](#)
- ✓ [Stroke Prevention PBSGL 2012](#) www.members.fmpe.org
- ✓ [Stroke Prevention in Women AAFP 2015](#)

11. In all patients with a history of TIA or completed stroke, and in asymptomatic patients at high risk for stroke, [offer antithrombotic treatment](#) (e.g., acetylsalicylic acid, clopidogrel) to appropriate patients to lower stroke risk.
ie. know PRIMARY AND SECONDARY prevention

What you should study: take your pick:

- ✓ [TIA II - Risk factor modification and treatment AAFP 2012](#)
- ✓ [Recurrent Stroke - Prevention Strategies AAFP 2017](#)
- ✓ [AHA/ASA secondary stroke prevention guideline](#)

A few other articles on TIA, which you should also cover:

- ✓ [TIA I - Dx and Evaluation AAFP 2012](#)
- ✓ [TIA in the clinic AIM 2011](#)