# World Stroke Day – 29 October: 'Every Minute Counts' – know the signs of stroke, act fast

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## News

World Stroke Day is observed every year on 29 October, led by the World Stroke Organization (WSO). The current WSO campaign is 'Every Minute Counts' – 'Learn the signs of stroke today; change a life tomorrow' (launched in 2025 and continued for World Stroke Day 2026). 2026 marks 20 years of the World Stroke Campaign. On 22 May 2026 the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA79) in Geneva adopted its first standalone resolution on stroke prevention and treatment.

## Key facts

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| **Date** | 29 October (annual) |
| **Led by** | World Stroke Organization (WSO) – formed c. 2006 by merger of the International Stroke Society and World Stroke Federation |
| **Campaign** | 'Every Minute Counts' – recognise signs, seek emergency care; 2026 – 20th year of the campaign |
| **WHA79** | 22 May 2026, Geneva – first standalone resolution on stroke |
| **Global burden** | Over 100 million people alive today have had a stroke (WSO) |

## Background

- Science: a stroke is the death of brain cells when blood flow to the brain is disrupted. A blocked artery causes 'ischaemic' stroke (the majority); a burst vessel causes 'haemorrhagic' stroke. A temporary blockage is a 'TIA' (mini-stroke).
- Signs – 'FAST': F – Face drooping, A – Arm weakness, S – Speech difficulty, T – Time to call emergency services. In ischaemic stroke, clot-dissolving treatment (thrombolysis) within a few hours of onset saves lives.
- Risk factors (WHA resolution): high blood pressure (the leading factor), tobacco, unhealthy diet, obesity, diabetes and physical inactivity. India sees 108–172 cases per 100,000 people a year.
- Indian programme: the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS, 2010) was renamed the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) in 2023; it runs under the National Health Mission (NHM).

**Tamil Nadu link:** 'Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam' (5 Aug 2021, Samanapalli, Krishnagiri) delivers medicines at home to people with hypertension and diabetes – the main stroke risk factors – and also offers palliative care and physiotherapy, which help post-stroke rehabilitation.


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