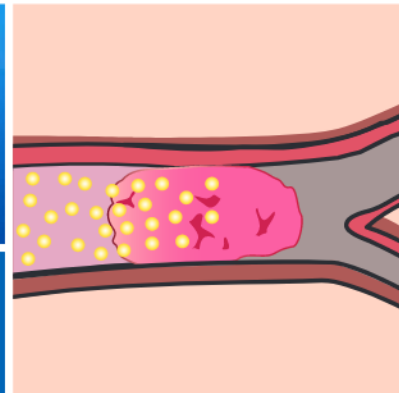


Treating a stroke with a drug

Thrombolysis

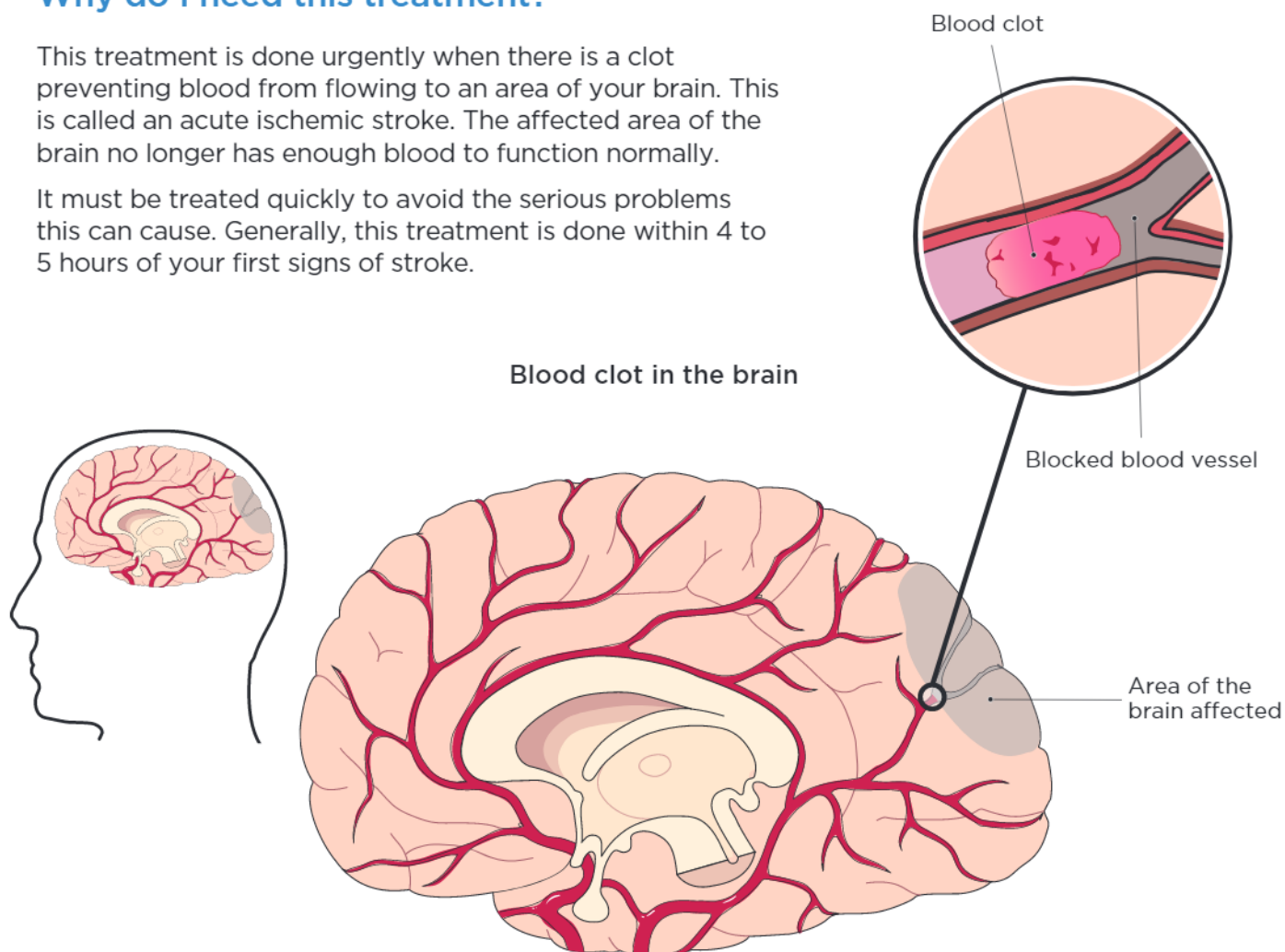


You are about to receive, or have just received, a medication to destroy a blood clot in a vessel in your brain. This treatment is called thrombolysis. This fact sheet describes how the treatment works and what to do afterwards.

Why do I need this treatment?

This treatment is done urgently when there is a clot preventing blood from flowing to an area of your brain. This is called an acute ischemic stroke. The affected area of the brain no longer has enough blood to function normally.

It must be treated quickly to avoid the serious problems this can cause. Generally, this treatment is done within 4 to 5 hours of your first signs of stroke.



What does this treatment involve?

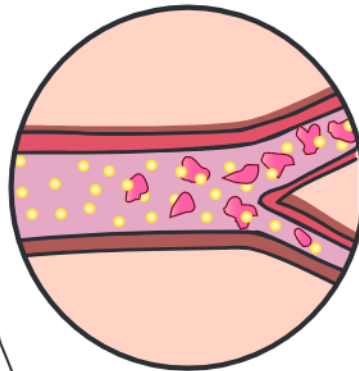
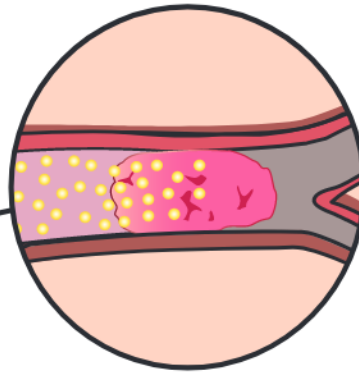
A drug, tenecteplase or alteplase, is used to destroy the clot. This is called “thrombolysis”. This treatment is not painful.

Steps of the procedure

1 The drug is injected into a vein.



2 The blood carries the drug to the clot.



3 The drug “breaks” the clot into tiny pieces that will be eliminated with other blood waste.

What are the risks associated with this treatment?

Possible risks include:

- bleeding (hemorrhaging): in the brain, urine, nose, stomach, intestines, or elsewhere
- allergic reaction to the drug (swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat tissue, making it difficult to breathe or swallow)

If this happens, your care team will take immediate action to treat the problem.

Are there any contraindications to this treatment?

This treatment cannot be given if:

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

How is the treatment done?

It involves 3 steps:

- 1** Exams (30 minutes maximum): blood test, weighing, brain scan, heart activity test (electrocardiogram or ECG).
- 2** Drug injection.
- 3** Monitoring for 24 to 48 hours, which begins during the treatment. A care team will regularly monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing, temperature, etc.) They will also check your neurological condition.

What does the care team do AFTER the intervention?

- You will be moved to a room in the Stroke Unit or Intensive Care Unit where you will continue to recover.
- A health care team will monitor your neurological status (strength, orientation, language) and vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing, temperature, etc.). They will also check that you're able to urinate and have a bowel movement.
- They will check your swallowing. See the fact sheet [*Detecting problems with swallowing*](#).
- Your treating physician will be notified of any changes in your health status.
- They will inquire about your comfort, if you have any questions, and your needs for support, as well as those of your family.
- The team will plan with you for your follow-up care and treatments.

Are there any precautions to take AFTER the treatment?

You must:

- > stay in bed for the specified amount of time (how long will depend on your medical condition)
- > ask the health care team for help to change your position in bed
- > **be supported by a member of your health care team** the first time you get out of bed, once you're able
- > eat and drink as instructed by the care team
- > follow instructions to resume your personal hygiene or to walk in your room or in the hallway
- > call a nurse immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - sudden headache
 - difficulty breathing
 - difficulty swallowing
 - swelling of the lips, tongue, or back of throat
 - nausea or vomiting



Medications

If you were taking any medications (diabetes, blood pressure, coagulation, etc.), your doses may be changed.

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



Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

At the hospital

Your care team can answer your questions.

After your return home

As a CHUM patient, you can call a CHUM nurse:

- > 514 890-8086
- > This service is available 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week

You can also contact a nurse in the Neurosciences Outpatient Centre, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.:

- > 514 890-8123

To cancel or change an appointment, call the Neurosciences Outpatient Centre, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.:

- > 514 890-8123



USEFUL RESOURCES

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada:
> 1 800 567-8563 (in Québec)
> 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/fiches-sante



Questions



Resource people and contacts

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

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca