

Bell's Palsy: The First Three Days

The six signs, the three day window for steroids, and the eye care that protects your sight while the nerve recovers.

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from NINDS, Mayo Clinic & Cleveland Clinic · sources below

Mayo Clinic says to seek medical help right away if you experience any type of paralysis, because you may be having a stroke. Bell's palsy is not caused by a stroke, but the symptoms of the two conditions are similar. Sudden one sided facial weakness is a same day call, not a next appointment question, and only a clinician can tell the two apart.



Do This

Get Seen The Same Day

- Sudden facial weakness
- Only an exam tells them apart
- Looks like a stroke can

COACH'S TIP Mayo Clinic says right away.

Write Down The Hour

- When the weakness started
- Your doctor will ask
- How fast it came on

COACH'S TIP NINDS on the exam.

Ask About Oral Steroids

- Usually started inside 3 days
- Raise it at the first visit
- They reduce nerve swelling

COACH'S TIP NINDS on new onset.

Ask About Antivirals Too

- Sometimes added to steroids
- Your doctor decides
- To improve the odds further

COACH'S TIP NINDS on treatment.

Protect The Eye All Day

- Lubricating drops by day
- Especially while sleeping
- A patch or tape at night

COACH'S TIP NINDS on eye protection.

Plan In Weeks, Not Days

- Improvement takes a few weeks
- Keep the follow up booked
- Most recover inside 6 months

COACH'S TIP NINDS on recovery.



Do Not

Do Not Diagnose It Yourself

- Stroke shares the symptoms
- An exam rules them out
- So do other nerve problems

COACH'S TIP Mayo Clinic when to see.

Do Not Wait Out Day Four

- Steroids start inside 3 days
- Later is not the same
- The window is short

COACH'S TIP NINDS on timing.

Do Not Leave The Eye Open

- Drying scratches the cornea
- Cover it before you sleep
- That risks lasting sight loss

COACH'S TIP Mayo lists the complication.

Do Not Expect One Test

- No lab test confirms it
- Other causes get ruled out
- Diagnosis is by examination

COACH'S TIP NINDS on diagnosis.

Do Not Self Mix Painkillers

- If you take prescriptions
- Interactions are the risk
- Ask before any shelf pill

COACH'S TIP NINDS on pain relief.

Do Not Skip The Follow Up

- Weakness can last longer
- Keep your provider in it
- Sometimes it is permanent

COACH'S TIP NINDS on the outlook.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

3 days Window to start oral steroids

48 to 72 h How fast symptoms appear

6 months Usual full recovery window