

Recognize a Stroke

Stroke is the 4th leading cause of death and is a leading cause of disability in the United States. Nearly one quarter of strokes occur under the age of 65. Stroke is a disease that affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. Women have more strokes than men. Women live longer so they are more vulnerable to have more strokes. **A stroke will likely occur quickly with no warning signs.**

Risk Factors for stroke: older age, high blood pressure, cholesterol abnormalities, unhealthy diet and weight, lack of physical activity, smoking, certain structural heart diseases or blood vessel diseases, heart rhythm disorder such as atrial fibrillation, clotting disorders.

Recognize an acute stroke:

- F** Facial drooping
- A** Arm or leg goes limp
- S** Speech is garbled or slurred
- T** Time to get the emergency room as soon as possible for best chances to recover

Other signs of a Stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the leg
- Sudden confusion or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Mini-stroke or "Transient Ischemic Attack or "TIA":

This type of stroke should be determined at the emergency room. The symptoms are the same but usually only last a few minutes.

What to do if you are having a stroke:

- Do **NOT** take an aspirin
- **CALL 911.** The ambulance will be able to give notice to the emergency room that you are having a stroke. They will be ready to do a CT scan of your head to determine if your stroke is due to a clot or bleed. If you have a brain vessel that is clogged with a clot, you only have two hours from time of symptoms to be a candidate to receive a medicine to dissolve the clot. If you have a brain vessel that is ruptured and bleeding, you will not be given blood thinners and other options will be considered.

