

Stroke is an Emergency. Acting Fast Can Save Lives.

Did you know that many Americans do not recognize the symptoms of a stroke? In fact, according to study reported by the National Stroke Association (NSA), 1 in 3 Americans are unable to name one symptom someone might exhibit while having a stroke. Because they can not identify the symptoms, stroke can go undiagnosed and untreated, possibly resulting in severe disability or death.

To determine whether someone may be having a stroke, the NSA developed **F.A.S.T.** – a simple tool that can help you recognize the symptoms and know when to get help.

Remember to think **F.A.S.T.**:

FACE -- Ask the person to smile. Look for drooping on one side of the face.

ARMS -- Ask the person to lift both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH -- Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are their words slurred? Can he/she repeat the sentence correctly?

TIME -- If the person shows any of these symptoms, time is critical. Call 911 or get to the hospital fast. Brain damage can be minimized if help is received immediately.

Stroke is a medical emergency. Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke. The longer blood flow is cut off to the brain, the greater the damage. Immediate treatment can save people's lives and enhance their chances for successful recovery.

Why is there a need to act fast?

Ischemic strokes, the most common type of strokes, can be treated with a drug called t-PA, that dissolves blood clots obstructing blood flow to the brain. The window of opportunity to start treating stroke patients is three hours, but to be evaluated and receive treatment, patients need to get to the hospital within 60 minutes.

What is the benefit of treatment?

A five-year study by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) found that some stroke patients who received t-PA within three hours of the start of stroke symptoms were at least 30 percent more likely to recover with little or no disability after three months.

Like your heart, lungs, and other major organs, a healthy brain is crucial for independent living. Learn more about stroke symptoms and prevention by visiting MyHealth@Anthem powered by WebMD at www.anthem.com.

Sources:

National Stroke Association –

<http://www.stroke.org/HomePage.aspx?P=c0ab5d743dab4411a916aeab32087192>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke -

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/knowstroke.htm#whattodo>