

Symptoms of a Stroke

When a stroke occurs, symptoms can be as unique as the individual experiencing them. The five “traditional” symptoms of stroke are listed below. If you see or have one or more of these symptoms, **don't wait. Call 911 right away!**

The 5 Traditional Symptoms of Stroke Are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing, or blurred vision in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Treatment can be more effective if received quickly. Every minute counts!

Did you know that stroke symptoms can often be different for men and women?

That's right. Results of a two-year study, published in the November 2002 issue of the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*¹ by stroke specialists from the University of Texas at Houston, and the University of Michigan Health System, concluded that **women were 62 percent more likely than men to report feeling sensations that differ from the list of "traditional" stroke symptoms**. Because women's symptoms can vary, this can sometimes prevent women from seeking immediate medical attention.

The study's findings stated that men were more likely to report the traditional symptoms of imbalance and paralysis of one side of their body. Women were more likely to report more “vague”, non-traditional symptoms including:

- Pain in face
- Pain in an arm or leg on one side of the body
- Changes in consciousness or disorientation
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Heart palpitations
- Nausea
- Hiccups

Delays in emergency treatment with clot-busting drugs can lead to long-term disability or even death from a stroke.

When it comes to stroke, it's important for both men and women to:

- Become familiar with the traditional and some of the non-traditional symptoms of stroke

- Talk with their doctor about their risk of stroke based on their age and medical history, and how to reduce any risk
- Seek immediate medical attention for any sudden change in their condition

Many people are more aware of heart attack symptoms than they are of stroke – or “brain attack” – symptoms. Just like the heart, brain health is critical to staying physically independent. Learn how to prevent stroke by visiting MyHealth@Anthem powered by WebMD at www.anthem.com.

References:

¹ Study results as reported in the Houston Chronical.com, November 7, 2002 - <http://www.chron.com/cgi-bin/auth/story.mpl/content/adpub/health/stories/stroke.html>

Other sources:

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke - http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/stroke_bookmark.htm

Baptist Health Systems - http://www.mbhs.org/health_topics/healthsource/winter_05/stroke.htm