

Stroke: Know the Signs. Act In Time

(NAPSA)—More than 600,000 Americans suffer a stroke each year. That's more than three times the number of cases of breast cancer. Yet, many Americans do not know the symptoms of a stroke or what to do when they witness someone having a stroke. A stroke is a medical emergency requiring immediate treatment. Knowing the signs and acting in time by calling 911 and getting treatment in a hospital can greatly improve recovery from a stroke.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), part of the National Institutes of Health, has developed an informational brochure called *Know Stroke: Know the Signs. Act in Time* to help aid in stroke education. This free brochure may help more Americans understand stroke and be able to take action to help themselves or a loved one.

Sometimes called a “brain attack,” a stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. Brain cells die when deprived of oxygen and nutrients provided by blood. Because stroke injures the brain, a person having the stroke may not realize what is happening. But, to a bystander the signs of a stroke are distinct:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes



Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke. Call 911 and get to the hospital immediately.

- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

In treating a stroke, every minute counts. A drug called t-PA can reverse the effects of the stroke by dissolving blood clots that obstruct blood flow to the brain, but to receive this treatment patients need to get to the hospital as quickly as possible, so that they can get treatment within three hours of their first symptoms. A breakthrough study by NINDS found that the stroke patients who received t-PA were at least 30 percent more likely to recover with little or no disability.

More information on stroke, including how to reduce the risk of stroke, is available in the NINDS brochure. Order free copies by calling, 1-800-352-9424 or by visiting www.ninds.nih.gov.