

Stroke Risk

(NAPS)—Sebastian Baker felt funny. He looked in the mirror and his reflection was off. Suddenly, he crashed to the floor and realized his left side was numb.

Baker, 46, had suffered a stroke. Like many of the 795,000 Americans who have a stroke each year, high blood pressure was the culprit.

F**Face Drooping****A****Arm Weakness****S****Speech Difficulty****T****Time to Call 9-1-1**

Learn to spot a stroke F.A.S.T.

“Uncontrolled blood pressure is the No. 1 reason people have strokes,” said Jeffrey L. Saver, M.D., professor of Neurology and director of the Comprehensive Stroke Center at the University of California, Los Angeles. “It’s important to check your blood pressure regularly and talk to your doctor about your numbers.”

While up to 80 percent of strokes may be prevented, everyone needs to learn the stroke signs and what to do during a stroke emergency. Bystanders are often the ones who need to call for help.

Through the Together to End Stroke initiative, sponsored by Covidien, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association teaches the acronym F.A.S.T. for stroke recognition:

- F—Face Drooping
- A—Arm Weakness
- S—Speech Difficulty
- T—Time to call 9-1-1

Additional stroke signs include: sudden severe headache with no known cause; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; or sudden confusion or trouble understanding. If someone experiences any of these symptoms, 9-1-1 should be called immediately.

“Prevention is the best cure, but in the event of a stroke, quick recognition and treatment may have a dramatic impact on the outcome,” said Mark A. Turco, M.D., chief medical officer, Covidien Vascular Therapies.

For Baker, treatment combined with therapy and hard work paid off. He’s made a joyous return to a fulfilling life.

For more information, visit www.StrokeAssociation.org.