

HEALTH MATTERS



Stroke Is A Medical Emergency: Every Minute Counts

(NAPSA)—Each year, more than 700,000 Americans suffer a stroke. It is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of long-term disability in the United States. Yet, many Americans do not know the symptoms or what to do when they witness someone having a stroke. The following information is provided to you by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

“Stroke is an unmistakable event. Few other medical conditions come on so suddenly or are so noticeable to a bystander,” said John R. Marler, M.D., associate director for clinical trials at NINDS.

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, if you are having a stroke, you 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
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause



Knowing the signs of a stroke and acting quickly can help prevent serious, long-term disability.

In treating a stroke, every minute counts. New treatments are available that greatly reduce the damage caused by a stroke. But you need to arrive at the hospital as soon as possible after symptoms start. Knowing the symptoms of a stroke and getting to the hospital quickly can help you act in time to save yourself—or someone you know—from serious long-term disability.

And making changes in your lifestyle can help prevent stroke. NINDS, part of the National Institutes of Health, is dedicated to research and education on the causes and treatments and prevention of stroke. Risk factors include family history, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, physical inactivity and being overweight. Talk to your doctor. Find out your risks and take action.

More information on stroke is available from the NINDS. Order free materials by calling 1-800-352-9424 or by visiting www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke.