

HEALTH ALERT!

Every Minute Counts When Treating Stroke

(NAPSA)—You can help protect yourself from stroke, the nation's third leading cause of death, and the leading cause of serious long-term disability. There is an approved treatment for stroke that dissolves blood clots in the brain, but it must be administered within three hours of the onset of symptoms. The good news is that new treatments are being developed that can be administered after more time passes. For any treatment to be successful in minimizing long-term disability, it's important to recognize the symptoms of stroke early and seek medical assistance as quickly as possible.

Seventy-five percent of Americans cannot name these warning signs of stroke:

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

The symptoms are often mistaken for tiredness or over-exertion and Americans wait, on average, 22 hours before seeking help. This limits treatment options and severely minimizes the chance for recovery.

Regardless of when you arrive at the hospital with one or more stroke symptoms, insist upon being evaluated for all available stroke treatments. Factors that increase one's chance for a stroke include:

- Increasing age
- Family history of stroke
- Race—African Americans and Hispanics are at high risk
- High blood pressure
- Personal history of diabetes



Give the ER staff as much help as possible. Answer all of their questions—something that you don't think is important might be a vital clue. Tell the staff when symptoms first appeared, if there's been a previous stroke or recent serious injury or illness and what medications you take. This can help professionals administer the best care.

Getting to the hospital as soon as symptoms appear can provide your doctors with a wider range of treatment options. Some treatment plans may include participating in a FDA-approved clinical trial for a new medication. Many doctors across the country use clinical trials to administer promising new treatments that may help people who have strokes. Although there is no guarantee that a clinical trial will help, all participating patients do contribute to the medical knowledge needed to develop future treatments. As part of a comprehensive stroke treatment plan, if your stroke has certain symptoms, participating in a clinical study is an important option to consider.

This information comes from Ono Pharma USA, Inc., a division of Ono Pharmaceuticals Co., Ltd. Contact your local stroke association for more information about stroke.