

HEALTH ALERT!

Key To Stroke Care: Know The Signs. Act In Time.

(NAPSA)—In treating a stroke, every minute counts. Knowing the symptoms of a stroke and getting to the hospital quickly is the key to getting a clot-busting drug called t-PA, still the most effective early treatment for most strokes according to recently published national guidelines. T-PA can reverse the effects of a stroke by dissolving blood clots that obstruct blood flow to the brain.

“The sooner the stroke is recognized and the patient begins receiving treatment, the better are the chances for a complete recovery,” said John R. Marler, M.D., associate director for clinical trials at 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.”

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



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

Each year more than 600,000 Americans suffer a stroke. It is the third leading cause of death and long-term disability in the U.S. Yet, many Americans do not know the symptoms of a stroke or what to do when they witness someone having a stroke.

The NINDS, part of the National Institutes of Health, has developed an informational campaign called *Know Stroke: Know the Signs. Act in Time* to educate Americans about the symptoms of stroke. Free campaign materials may help more people understand stroke and be able to take action if they suffer from or witness someone having a stroke.

“It is really worth the effort it takes to call 911,” said Dr. Marler. “Treating stroke as an emergency pays back in terms of going home and living your life.”

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