

Identification of a Stroke

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How does a STROKE occur?

- When the blood supply to part of the brain is blocked (called an ischemic stroke) or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts (called a hemorrhagic stroke).
- Brain cells that do not get oxygen become injured and die.
- Death or permanent disability can result. With timely treatment, the risk of death and disability from a STROKE can be lowered.

Did you know...

- Stroke is the 3rd leading cause of death in the United States with over 140,000 people dying annually?
- Women account for more than 60% of STROKE deaths.
- Stroke death rates are higher for African Americans than for whites, even at younger ages.
- Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability.
- Strokes can occur at ANY age.
- Nearly 1/4 of strokes occur in people under the age of 65.
- Strokes will cost almost \$68.9 billion in both direct and indirect costs in 2009 (American Heart Association. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2009 Update. American Heart Association; 2009).

What are the symptoms of a STROKE?

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body
- Sudden dimness or loss of vision, particularly in one eye
- Loss of speech, trouble talking or understanding what others are saying
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause
- Unexplained dizziness, unstable walking or falling, especially along with any of the other symptoms
- Another warning sign of a stroke is called a transient ischemic attack (TIA). A TIA is a "mini-stroke" that can cause the symptoms listed above and may only last a few minutes, but should not be ignored. People who have a TIA are at greater risk of having a stroke later.

How can you tell if someone is having a STROKE?

- A bystander can recognize a stroke by asking the individual to perform the following tasks:
 - Smile
 - Talk and speak a simple sentence coherently. (i.e. "It is sunny out today")
 - Raise Both Arms
 - Stick out your tongue
- If the individual has trouble with ANY of these tasks, call an emergency number immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. Receiving immediate treatment is critical in lowering the risk of disability and even death.

What can you do to reduce your risk of STROKE?

- Maintain normal blood pressure levels / control high blood pressure
- Prevent / treat elevated blood sugar (diabetes mellitus)
- Prevent / treat elevated cholesterol
- Prevent / treat heart disease
- Treat atrial fibrillation
- Quit tobacco - if you don't smoke or chew, don't start. If you do, try to quit

For more information: www.cdc.gov click on *Diseases and Conditions*; then click on *Stroke*
<http://www.aafp.org> click on Patients; then click on S; then scroll and click on Stroke