



Women's Health Alert

Stroke Is An Emergency: How F.A.S.T. Action Can Save The Women In Your Life

(NAPSA)—A new study by the National Stroke Association (NSA) shows most Americans do not treat stroke as an emergency. Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body, is the most common symptom of stroke, the third leading cause of death in America. Unfortunately, when a stroke or brain attack first hits, many people do not recognize the symptoms and often do not call 9-1-1. In fact, the NSA survey reports one in three Americans cannot name a single symptom a person might experience while having a stroke.

ACT F.A.S.T.

Worried about remembering the symptoms of stroke and what to do? It's easy, just remember to act F.A.S.T.

FACE—Ask the person to smile.

Does one side of the face droop?

ARMS—Ask the person to raise both arms.

Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH—Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence.

Are the words slurred? Can the patient repeat the sentence correctly?

TIME—If the person shows any of these symptoms, time is important. Call 911 or get to the hospital fast. Brain cells are dying.

Every minute counts for stroke patients and acting F.A.S.T. to treat stroke can lead to more patients getting the treatments they so desperately need. The most effective stroke treatments are only available if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within the first three hours of the first symptoms. In fact, more than 30 percent of Americans are not aware that stroke patients may not be eligible for stroke treatments if they arrive at the hospital after the three-hour window.

“Understanding the warning

Common stroke symptoms include:

- * 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



signs is important because there are treatments we can give for stroke. If you understand the warning signs and get to the hospital quickly, we can even possibly reverse the stroke itself,” says Dr. Dawn Kleindorfer, assistant professor of neurology at University of Cincinnati School of Medicine.

What is a stroke?

A stroke is a brain attack. It occurs when a clogged artery stops the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain or when a blood vessel bursts in the brain. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells die, resulting in physical problems such as difficulty moving or speaking and mental problems such as memory loss.

Women and stroke

Learning to act F.A.S.T. is especially important for women. While women are much more worried about dying from breast cancer, few realize that stroke kills twice as many women as breast cancer. To reduce their stroke risk, women and men can take some simple steps such as quitting smoking, eating healthy or exercising more, to reduce their chance of having a stroke. The most common risk factors for stroke include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, atrial fibrillation as well as

being overweight, smoking, consuming too much alcohol and previous TIA or mini strokes.

Prevention

The good news is 80 percent of strokes are preventable and there are many things you can do to help lower your risk. The NSA has developed the Women in Your Life program to teach men and women about preventing stroke and the importance of recognizing stroke symptoms in each other. Brochures, wallet cards and a special portion of the NSA Web site are available to help teach people about stroke symptoms, risk factors and preventative care.

Dr. Kleindorfer says stroke causes special problems for women. “Stroke uniquely impacts women because they tend to be older when they have their stroke and, because of that, more women die from stroke than men. Women tend to have more disability and have trouble doing the activities of their daily living after their stroke.”

Women also outnumber men as caregivers to stroke survivors. So the impact of stroke is not only felt by women who have a stroke, but by the women who take care of the stroke survivor.

Take Action

Make a commitment today to ask your doctor about ways to control risk factors for stroke. NSA is providing physicians with information and tools to guide lifestyle changes that could significantly reduce your stroke risk and possibly even extend your life.

It is time for you to learn to recognize a stroke, take F.A.S.T. action, and save the lives of the men and Women in Your Life.

For additional information and to order a free Women in Your Life booklet, visit www.stroke.org or call 1-800-STROKES. Women in Your Life is sponsored by AstraZeneca.