

Health Alert

Stroke: Time Is Of The Essence

(NAPSA)—Did you know that stroke is the leading cause of disability in the United States? Each year, approximately 795,000 people suffer a stroke and more than 137,000 people will die from complications related to stroke.

Nearly 85 percent of all strokes are acute ischemic strokes, which occur when a blood clot in an artery or vessel of the brain prevents brain cells from getting the oxygen-carrying blood they need to function. This blockage causes brain cells to start dying and results in a sudden loss of brain function.

Stroke can result in permanent mental and physical impairments, such as trouble thinking, speaking or moving. It is estimated that approximately 1.9 million brain cells die each minute during a large-vessel stroke; therefore, time is of the essence when seeking medical attention.

“Do not hesitate if you or a loved one begins to experience the signs and symptoms of stroke,” said Justin A. Zivin, M.D., Ph.D., professor of neurosciences at the University of California at San Diego. “Call 9-1-1 immediately in order to seek medical attention.”

Signs and symptoms of stroke include speech impairment, arm numbness and weakness, severe headache, sudden confusion, trouble seeing out of one or both eyes, as well as uncontrollable drooping of the face.



If you ever think you or someone else is having a stroke, get medical help immediately.

In the event that you or someone you know begins to show signs and symptoms of a stroke, the F.A.S.T. test can be used as a quick screening tool:

• **F**ace—Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

• **A**rms—Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

• **S**peech—Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred? Can he or she repeat the sentence correctly?

• **T**ime—If the person shows any of these symptoms, time is important. Immediate medical attention may limit the effects of stroke. Therefore, call 9-1-1 or get to the hospital immediately.

To learn more about stroke, see your doctor or visit www.stroke.org.