

# Women's Health **UPDATE**

## Women And Neurological Conditions

(NAPSA)—The last decade has seen dramatic changes in understanding the underlying causes of many neurological conditions. This has led to new methods of treatment and, in some cases, the promise of prevention.

Developments in two neurological conditions—stroke and multiple sclerosis—are of special interest to women.

According to a new report by the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC), women are more likely than men to have a stroke and more likely to die from it.

A stroke happens when a clot shuts off blood flow to the brain or a blood vessel in the brain bursts. One reason a stroke may be more fatal to women is that they are less likely to receive the necessary diagnostic tests, even when exhibiting the symptoms. They are also less likely to receive post-stroke interventions and more likely to be depressed and have impaired functions six months after the stroke.

Medical advances in treatment of stroke have made it possible to reduce permanent damage from stroke, yet only 10 to 20 percent of stroke victims are eligible because the time during which they can be effectively treated is so short. Patients must arrive at a hospital and begin treatment with clot-busting drugs within three hours of the first symptom.

According to the NWHRC's new report, it is imperative for women to learn to recognize stroke symptoms and ask for diagnostic tests.

Another neurological condition of special interest to women is

### Stroke Symptoms

If you see or have one or more of these symptoms, don't wait; call 911 right away:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or 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.



multiple sclerosis (MS). The condition, in which the immune system attacks nerve cells, is twice as common in women, leading some researchers to suspect a link between estrogen levels and the disease.

Today, most people receive disease-modifying therapies as soon as they are diagnosed with MS. Such therapies are most effective when the disease is diagnosed early. Women who have MS need to know that the effects of the disease can vary widely and that the disease typically strikes younger women.

Thanks to the advances in how neurological diseases are diagnosed and treated, there's a better understanding of the way diseases affect individuals. For more information on neurological diseases or for a complimentary copy of *Women and Neurologic Conditions*, visit the NWHRC Web site at [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org) or call 877-986-9472.