



When it Comes to Stroke...Pay Now or Pay Later *By Thomas Habiger, MD*

In the U.S. last year, nearly 800,000 individuals had a stroke. A stroke occurs when there is a loss of blood to an area of the brain either through a disruption of flow called “ischemic stroke” or leaking of blood out the blood vessel called “hemorrhagic stroke”. The events are typically sudden - without warning - and damage may be severe with recovery being slow and incomplete.

Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and the leading cause of long term disability. It can occur at any age, although for different reasons. The evaluation and treatment for these events is an emergency requiring a call to 911 and transport to a hospital equipped in stroke care.

Education of the symptoms of stroke

have included the FAST protocol (see image). Additional symptoms also requiring emergency care include: sudden vision loss, sudden dizziness and loss of balance or sudden confusion. Urgent evaluation and treatment with clot busting drug, TPA, and now catheter procedures into the brain to retrieve clots can not only be lifesaving, but prevent severe long-term disability. An important point to remember is that some stroke-like events may be transient, lasting only minutes to hours. This type of warning is called a Transient Ischemic Stroke (TIA) and requires immediate treatment. If ignored there is a high risk of another episode in the following days that may be permanent.

The best way to avoid having to go

through this nightmare is to prevent a stroke. Medical evidence tells us that controlling all vascular risk factors may lower your chance of a stroke by as much as 80%.

These life changing measures include:

- a low fat, low salt diet as outlined in the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- routine exercise of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week
- not smoking
- limited alcohol intake

Medical risk factors include:

- atrial fibrillation
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- diabetes

These may require medication and close follow-up by your primary medical provider. Stroke is a “pay me now or pay me later” disease as ignoring these simple solutions may cost you dearly.

SPOT A STROKE™

FACE Drooping

ARM Weakness

SPEECH Difficulty

TIME to Call 911

StrokeAssociation.org

American Heart Association | American Stroke Association | Together to End Stroke™

LOCATIONS

Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
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