



CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Emergencies - Brain Attack/Heart Attack

Minutes Matter...

Brain attack, another term for stroke, transient ischemic attack (TIA) and cerebrovascular accident (CVA) is a medical emergency. **How quickly you get the person in your care assistance can save his/her life and affect his or her long-term health, as well as his/her ability to function independently.** The third leading cause of death, brain attack or stroke is the leading cause of serious long-term disability in the U.S.

Different strokes for different folks

Strokes can differ in their presentation. Some can present with sudden, yet very subtle changes in speech, coordination or strength. The person suffering this type of stroke may not even realize the change is occurring. This is why some people never seek medical care. Others may note something is “different,” but the symptoms are mild and attributed to “a bad day” or another problem. Other attacks are much more obvious and may present with a sudden weakness or inability to move one side of the body. Other signs and symptoms may include the sudden progressive loss of vision in one eye, like a “curtain coming down,” sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg on one

Note

Each year, about 60,000 more women than men have a stroke.

side of the body, sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, sudden changes in walking, balance or coordination or the onset of an unusual headache.

As a caregiver, if you suspect stroke, stay calm and call 911 immediately. Early identification and medical attention can make a difference.

For example, to be helpful, one treatment for brain attack must be given within 3-4 hours of the attack. This is a “clot-busting drug,” tissue plasminogen activator or TPA for short. TPA can totally reverse stroke in over 30% of those whose stroke was caused by an interruption of blood flow to an area of the brain. These *ischemic strokes* are the most common type of stroke.

Another type of stroke, *hemorrhagic stroke* is caused by a burst blood vessel that bleeds into the brain. This type of stroke has different emergency treatments, including possible surgery.

Without prompt care, 50% of stroke victims will have subsequent dependency in some activities of daily living, and 10% will require total care. **So stay calm, think FAST, and act FAST.**



Heart Attack

Warning signs of a heart attack can be both sudden and intense or they can start out with mild aches and pains and develop slowly. It is important to be able to recognize these warning signs and report them immediately by calling 911:

- * New chest pain or discomfort that lasts longer than 15 minutes and is not relieved by rest or medication
- * Discomfort in other areas of the body (jaw, neck, back or arm)
- * Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea/vomiting or lightheadedness
- * Fainting spell or loss of consciousness

The Ombudsman program can handle your concerns about areas such as elder abuse, client care, consumer rights, etc. For more information, call 1-800-582-7277.

About every 26 seconds, an American will suffer a coronary event, and about every minute someone will die from one.

Note

Heart Attack Signs in Women

Women who have had a heart attack recalled having warning signs up to a month before their heart attack. Their unique warning signs were not recognized or were misdiagnosed when they sought medical care. The most common early warning signs are unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath, indigestion and anxiety. *Source: Circulation, 2003, vol. 108*

For information about Ohio Medicaid programs or to report suspected Medicaid fraud, you may call the Ohio Medicaid Fraud Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.

Here's a tool to help you remember what to look for, so you can call emergency assistance. Think FAST, act FAST:

FAST - The Cincinnati Stroke Scale

Facial droop Look at the smile; have the person show his/her teeth. Does the face look lopsided? If the face droops on one side, this could be a brain attack.



Arm weakness This could be subtle. The person could drop things, be unable to hold arms extended in front without one arm "drifting" down. In more severe cases, there may be inability to move the arm at all.



Speech Have the person repeat "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." The speech should be clear. If slurred, garbled or abnormal in any way, or if the person is unable to speak at all, this could be a brain attack.

Time Note the time the changes started. This is very important when determining what emergency treatment is given at the hospital.



Emergency Tips

- Keep 911 posted on all phones; cue it as a speed dial.
- Find out if your community has a certified stroke medical center (www.strokecenters.org)
- Keep a "ready pack" of information, including insurance, physician's name and contact information, medication list, past medical problems and allergies. Keep this information updated. Also include in your ready pack:
 - ✓ Contact information for other family to be notified
 - ✓ Document of durable power of attorney if applicable
 - ✓ Copy of the person's living will/advance directives, if applicable
- Know the signs and symptoms of brain attack and don't hesitate.

Resources for You

American Heart Association

Phone: (214) 373-6300
or 1-800-AHA-USA1
www.AmericanHeart.org

The American Stroke Association

www.StrokeAssociation.org
Stroke Family "Warnline"
1-888-4-Stroke (478-7653)

Taking Care of Yourself--"Be serious about laughter"

There is one simple, easy exercise you can do anywhere, anytime to take care of yourself...laugh! Did you know that laughter provides a quick on-the-spot work-out? Laughter stretches facial and body muscles, increases pulse and blood pressure, and increases breathing, which promotes better circulation and provides your body with fresh oxygen. In fact, studies have shown that laughter may help prevent heart disease, alleviate some of the symptoms of arthritis, and reduce the level of pain people experience. The sense of hopefulness about the future increases when people laugh and have a sense of humor. This laughter is serious business! Here are a few tips for laughter exercise:

- Find a friend who enjoys laughing and makes you feel good to be around.
 - Read cartoons and save your favorites; read them often.
 - Watch funny videos or movies often.
- Commit to improving your health and well being through laughter.

Inspiration

The crisis you have to worry about the most is the one you don't see coming.
~Mike Mansfield

LIVE LIFE LAUGHING

I think I'll have the heart attack on a plate.



Caregiver Resources

Social Security Begins Taking Applications Online

A new service from the Social Security Administration now allows you to apply online in as little as 15 minutes for retirement benefits. The website is: www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices and then double click, Apply for Benefits.

Medicare Made Clear

Understanding Medicare can be difficult, however, through a partnership of Retirement Living TV and United Healthcare Medicare Solutions, you can now receive a free video titled, "Medicare Made Clear." To request your free copy, call 1-877-745-3384.