



Helping You Age Better!

Pamela K. Matura, Executive Director

CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Stroke

React FAST—The Cincinnati Stroke Scale is used by EMTs to identify a stroke. The acronym **FAST** is for quick identification of stroke symptoms:

F FACE—Facial Droop: Have the person smile or show teeth. Is the smile even or lop-sided?

Normal: Both sides of the face move equally or not at all.

Abnormal: One side of the patient’s face droops.

A ARM—Motor Weakness: Check for arm drift: close eyes, extend arms, palms up

Normal: Arms remain extended equally, or drift equally, or do not move at all.

Abnormal: One arm drifts down when compared with the other.

S SPEECH—Have the person repeat, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

Normal: The phrase is repeated clearly and correctly.

Abnormal: Words are slurred, abnormal, or they can’t speak.

T TIME—Last Seen Normal: This is important in determining the type of treatment they receive.

The FAST test is a helpful tool that people can use to reduce the time to treatment, because **time lost is brain lost.**

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.

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.

Emergencies - When to Go to the Emergency Room

In the course of caring for an older person or one with Alzheimer’s disease, it is likely that an accident will occur or the person will appear to be seriously ill. A person with dementia can fall and break a bone and not complain of pain. On the other hand, a relatively minor illness or discomfort may make the person extremely upset. Because of dementia, the person may not be able to help you decide what kind of care is needed. Is this an emergency? If it is, you should call 911, the fire department, or whatever agency is in charge of sending the Emergency Medical Service in your area. You should *not* try to take the person to the emergency



- becomes unconscious or has a marked change in mental state
- sudden severe chest pain
- a fall that results in severe pain or inability to move
- an accident that results in a blow to the head
- uncontrollable bleeding
- high fever accompanied by confusion and delusions

- difficulty breathing
- no signs of breathing (no movement or response to touch or voice)
- repeated or forceful vomiting; is vomiting blood or bleeding from the rectum
- failure to urinate for more than twelve hours
- sudden slurring of speech, loss of vision or balance, extreme weakness
- violent or uncontrollable behavior
 - has swallowed a poisonous substance
 - has had a seizure
 - a severe headache and slurred speech
 - has pressure or severe pain in the abdomen that does not go away

- if moving the person could cause further injury
 - if traffic or distance would cause a life-threatening delay in traveling to the hospital
 - if the person is too heavy for you to lift or help
- Ambulance service is expensive and may *not* be covered by insurance. Use it when you believe there is an *emergency*.

In An Emergency

Step 1: Call 911.

Step 2: Care for the victim.

Also, **call 911** for emergencies involving fire, explosion, poisonous gas, fallen electrical wires, or other life-threatening situations.

Items to Take to ER

- insurance policy numbers
- a list of medical problems and medications being taken
- the personal physician's name and phone number
- the name and number of a relative or friend of the person in your care
- your own wallet with identification, credit card, and cash for food/reading material
- a pair of shoes, clothes, and a coat to be worn home if the person is not admitted to the hospital.

DNR

If the person in your care has signed a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, have it available to show the paramedics. Otherwise, they are required to initiate resuscitation (reviving the person). The order must go with the patient and be with them at all times.

NOTE

Make sure 911 is posted on your phone or ideally is on speed-dial. Keep written driving instructions to your home near the phone. If you have a speakerphone, use the speaker when talking to the dispatcher. This way, you can follow the dispatcher's instructions while attending to the emergency.

Chest Pain

Any chest pain that lasts more than a few minutes is related to the heart until proven otherwise. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY. Don't wait to see if it goes away. Danger signs include—

- pain radiating from the chest down the arms, up the neck to the jaw, and into the back
- crushing, squeezing chest pain or heavy pressure in the chest
- shortness of breath, sweating, nausea and vomiting, weakness
- bluish, pale skin
- skin that is moist
- excessive perspiration.

If the person is unresponsive (no movement or response to touch or voice), call 911. Be prepared to start CPR.

NOTE

Courses in CPR are available from your local American Red Cross, hospital, or other agency.

Taking Care of Yourself

- Better Sleep for Better Dieting

If you are trying to lose weight, sleep a sufficient amount. If you are not sleeping enough while dieting, you may be hungrier and struggle to adhere to the regimen.

Sounder sleep rules:

- Reserve your bedroom for only sleep and intimacy. Make your bedroom a sanctuary from the normal hustle and bustle of life.
- Make a sleep schedule. Before that sleep period starts, give yourself time to unwind slowly. Dim the lights in your bedroom an hour before sleep.
- Make sure your room is cool at around 67 degrees.
- Don't eat a large meal two to three hours before going to sleep.
- Limit alcohol. It can help you fall asleep more quickly, but later disrupts sleep.
- Avoid caffeine for at least three hours before going to sleep.

Most of all, try to clear your mind of hurts, worries and future planning.

Source: *Annals of Internal Medicine*; *New York Times*; *WebMD*

Inspiration

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!

Don't Fall – Be Safe

Messy Floors? Are papers, magazines, books, shoes, or other objects strewn on the floor? Always keep objects off the floor.

NOTE

A major cause of emergency room visits for frail or demented older adults is dehydration, which occurs when a person is either not drinking enough liquids or excreting too much urine. The most common symptom is headache.

Live Life Laughing!

DOCTOR: Breathe in and out.

PATIENT: Is there any other way?



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