

HealthMatters



If You Experience a Stroke – Every Stroke of the Clock Counts!

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot, or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the oxygen-carrying blood it needs, so it starts to die, in minutes. And the effects of serious strokes are often permanent because when these brain cells die, they're not replaced.

Strokes are more common than you might think. They kill more than 137,000 people a year. That's about 1 of every 18 deaths. It's the third leading cause of death in the U.S. behind heart disease and cancer.

As devastating as strokes are, the warning signs can be subtle, and thus misinterpreted.

They are:

- ▶ Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- ▶ Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- ▶ Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- ▶ Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- ▶ Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

There are actions that, when taken quickly, can reduce the effects of stroke and give you a better chance at recovery. First, upon experiencing any of the above symptoms, immediately call 9-1-1 or EMS so an ambulance can be sent to you. Then, make sure to check the time and note when the symptoms began, because in the case of a blood-clot related stroke, clot-busting medicine can be given within 3 hours of the stroke's onset, and may reduce any long-term disability. If you or someone you know experiences any of the warning signs of a stroke remember to act quickly – when a stroke occurs, every minute counts.

Did You Know?

- ▶ Best Doctors is a free and confidential service
- ▶ Best Doctors was founded by Harvard Medical School Physicians
- ▶ Over 2 million people are covered under Best Doctors
- ▶ There are over 50,000 Expert specialists that work with Best Doctors

If you have
questions call
1-866-904-0910.