

A focus on Strokes

Knowing what to do is vital

What is a stroke

Strokes are the #3 leading cause of death in the United States, behind only heart disease and cancer. Risk factors for stroke include cigarette use, high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, and diabetes.

A stroke is a type of cardiovascular disease that affects the arteries leading to the brain. It occurs when one of those blood vessels is either blocked by a clot (thrombus) or bursts (hemorrhage). Part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen that it needs, so its cells start to die.

If a stroke occurs, treatment must begin immediately to reduce poor outcomes, otherwise parts of the body will cease to function normally as more of the brain is affected. If treatment is delayed, a stroke can be fatal.

Warning signs

Because time is critical, it's important to recognize the signs of a stroke. These may come on suddenly or progress over time:

- Numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg – usually on one side of your body
- Confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

What to do

If you or somebody in your presence exhibits signs of a stroke, it's vital to take immediate action:

- Call 911 or Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
 - An ambulance with advanced life support should be dispatched
- Record the time so you know when symptoms first appeared
 - The drug tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) can be administered within three hours of symptoms first appearing; it is the only FDA-approved drug approved for the treatment of stroke

For more information about strokes, risk factors, prevention, and warning signs, contact your health care provider, your Concentra clinician or health specialist, or visit the American Heart Association's Stroke Web site at: www.strokeassociation.org.



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