

WHAT IS STROKE?

A **stroke** occurs when a blood vessel feeding the brain gets clogged or bursts. As a result, one's blood and oxygen supply is interrupted and, thus, neither that part of the brain nor the part of the body it controls can then function properly.

Are all strokes the same?

There are different types of strokes, also referred to as “brain attacks.” The majority of strokes — approximately 87% — are “ischemic” strokes, in which a clot (i.e. plaque or fatty deposits) has clogged an artery in the brain or brain stem and caused obstruction of blood and oxygen flow to and within the brain.

A TIA (transient ischemic attack), or “mini stroke,” results when a clot blocks an artery for a short period of time. Though side effects are typically temporary, TIA symptoms are the same as a stroke. A percentage of major strokes are preceded by minor strokes and, therefore, should be treated with the same sense of medical urgency.

A “hemorrhagic” stroke, which accounts for about 13% of all strokes, happens when a blood vessel ruptures. As blood collects in the brain, brain cells are compromised and begin to die. All types of strokes — ischemic, TIA, and hemorrhagic — are medical emergencies. **Call 9-1-1 immediately** if you or someone you are with display any sign of stroke.

What are the warning signs of stroke?

- 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

How do you recognize the warning signs of stroke?

Global Stroke Resource Inc. (www.Bcenter.com) recommends that individuals learn the F.A.S.T. acronym to identify stroke symptoms:



Face: Is the face displaying signs of weakness? Ask the person to smile and note if mouth or eyes droop.



Arms: Are limbs weak? Ask the person to hold both arms straight out. Does one arm drift downward?



Speech: Has verbal communication, such as speech and/or understanding, become difficult? Ask the person to recite a simple sentence without slurring.



Time: If you observe stroke warning signs in yourself or someone else, call 9-1-1 immediately.