

RECOGNIZING A STROKE

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in adults. The good news is that treatments are available that can greatly reduce the damage caused by a stroke. However, you need to recognize the symptoms of a stroke and get to a hospital quickly. Getting treatment within 60 minutes can prevent disability.



What is a stroke?

A stroke occurs when blood fails to reach brain cells due to a blood clot or bleeding in the brain. There are three types of strokes. A thrombotic stroke occurs when an artery is blocked by a clot forming on a deposit (plaque) on the wall of the artery. An embolic stroke occurs when a piece of clot or one of these plaques breaks off and gets stuck in a smaller part of the artery, cutting off blood flow beyond that point. A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when there is a rupture of a diseased artery in the brain.

Signs and symptoms of a stroke.

The warning signs of a stroke may include:

- Visual problems like a sudden change in vision or sudden double vision
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding. Sometimes weakness in the muscles of the face can cause drooling
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause which may be accompanied by vomiting, dizziness or altered consciousness



RECOGNIZING A STROKE ~ CONTINUED

If you notice one or more of these signs, even if they seem to fluctuate or disappear, don't wait. Call 9-1-1. Every second counts when restoring blood flow to the brain because with every second lost, more brain cells die. The longer a stroke goes untreated, the greater the potential for brain damage and disability. To maximize the effectiveness of treatment, it's best that you get to the emergency room within 60 minutes of your first symptoms. Note when signs and symptoms begin, because the length of time they have been present may guide treatment decisions.

Effects of a Stroke

The problems experienced by a person who has had a stroke depend on what part of the brain is damaged. Most people who survive a stroke have some degree of function recovery. Some return almost completely to normal, while others have only partial return. Emotionally, strokes can have a profound effect on both persons who have experienced a stroke and their families. After a stroke, you or a loved one may experience fear, anxiety, guilt, anger, resentment and overwhelming feelings of grief. Family members most often experience extreme anxiety about what the future will bring and how to meet the needs of the individual - this is where Loving Arms Elder Care can support you and your loved one. Please give us a call and we can discuss the personal support services that we offer.