

Be prepared to take FAST action if you suspect a stroke

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(HealthDay)—Would you be able to recognize if you or someone close

to you were having a stroke? A stroke is a 911 medical emergency and every second counts for survival.

To help you recognize the signs of [stroke](#), the National Stroke Association wants you to remember F-A-S-T, or fast.

F stands for "face." Signs of stroke include drooping or numbness on just one side of the face. An uneven smile is another clue that something's wrong.

A stands for "arm." Is just one arm weak or numb? If the person tries to lift both arms, does one drift downward? In general, stroke signs appear on just one side of the body.

S stands for "speech." When a stroke happens, the person can't speak or their speech is slurred or hard to understand. He or she won't be able to accurately repeat a simple sentence.

T stands for "time." It's time to call 911 if you see any of these symptoms. Even if the symptoms go away, the person needs to get to the hospital fast. There's a finite window of opportunity for care, particularly the administration of a specialized clot-busting medication, needed when the stroke is due to a blood clot.

More Signs of Stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness in one leg.
- Sudden confusion.
- Trouble understanding, seeing or walking.
- Dizziness or lack of balance.
- A sudden severe headache with no known cause.

It's good to know the name and location of the stroke center nearest to

you. Leading hospitals and medical centers with comprehensive stroke services often carry the designation "Certificate of Distinction" from the Joint Commission, an accreditation organization. You can access a stroke center database at qualitycheck.org.

To protect yourself and loved ones, learn all you can about stroke *now*, so you'll be prepared should an emergency strike.

More information: The National Stroke Association has more [facts about stroke](#).

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