

Consumer Health: Do you know the warning signs of stroke?

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May is National Stroke Awareness Month, which makes this a good time to learn about the warning signs of stroke and the need for prompt

treatment.

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. and a major cause of serious disability for adults. More than 795,000 people in the U.S. have a stroke each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Stroke risk increases with age, especially after 55, but strokes can occur at any age.

A stroke occurs when the [blood supply](#) to part of your brain is interrupted or reduced, preventing [brain tissue](#) from getting oxygen and nutrients. Brain cells begin to die in minutes.

A stroke is a medical emergency, and prompt treatment is crucial. Early action can reduce [brain damage](#) and other complications. If you or someone you know is experiencing a stroke, you should call 911 and seek emergency medical care right away.

To recognize the signs of stroke, remember the acronym FAST:

- Face: Does the face droop on one side when the person tries to smile?
- Arms: Is one arm lower when the person tries to raise both arms?
- Speech: Can the person repeat a simple sentence? Is speech slurred or hard to understand?
- Time: During a stroke, every minute counts. If you observe any of these signs, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

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