

Stroke awareness: Understanding risks and need for urgent treatment

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It's always important to prioritize health by participating in stroke risk screenings. These assessments offer invaluable insights into personal health profiles, enabling you to address potential risk factors head-on.

Through simple measures such as monitoring [blood pressure](#), measuring [cholesterol levels](#), and adopting healthier lifestyle choices, you have the opportunity to dramatically reduce your susceptibility to stroke. Whether accessed online, in public programs, or through primary care providers, these screenings can provide proactive steps towards a healthier future.

As we delve deeper into stroke awareness, it's imperative to familiarize yourself with the BE FAST acronym. Regardless of your age, it is important to know the symptoms of stroke, and to act fast if you think you or someone else is having a stroke.

The acronym BE FAST can help you remember some of the more common symptoms of stroke and to call 911 immediately. BE FAST was developed by Intermountain Health care, as an adaptation of the FAST model implemented by the American Stroke Association.

BE FAST stands for a sudden onset of problems:

- Balance or leg weakness
- Eye problems, such as visual loss or double vision
- Facial drooping
- Arm weakness
- Speech that is slurred or otherwise changed
- Time—the need to call 911 immediately

It is also important to know which hospitals in your area are stroke-certified. A hospital may be designated as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital, a Primary Stroke Center, a Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center, or the most advanced certification of a Comprehensive Stroke Center. To receive or maintain a given certification, institutions must achieve and keep up specific criteria that are externally reviewed.

Remember, if a stroke does occur, time is essential. Do not ignore the

symptoms—you or a loved one may be spared permanent disability by acting quickly.

Avoiding or delaying seeking emergent help can have drastic consequences because effective stroke treatments are available, but need to be started soon after symptoms begin. It is also important not to dismiss even short-term symptoms because they are a warning that a major stroke may occur over the next hours or days.

May's spotlight on stroke awareness serves as a reminder of the importance of proactive health care measures. By embracing stroke risk screenings, familiarizing yourself with stroke symptoms, and recognizing the role of certified stroke centers, you can take meaningful steps towards safeguarding your health and well-being against the potentially devastating effects of stroke.

Prioritize your health this month and beyond, empowering yourself and your community to act swiftly and decisively in the face of [stroke](#) risk.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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