

During coronavirus pandemic, don't ignore symptoms of heart attack, stroke

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(HealthDay)—Fewer heart attack and stroke patients are seeking

medical care since the coronavirus pandemic began and doctors are wondering why.

It's possible that during the pandemic, patients are ignoring symptoms that would otherwise worry them, doctors from Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles suggest.

While [investigators](#) are trying to figure out what's happening, Dr. Patrick Lyden, a professor of neurology at Cedars-Sinai, wants people to know the signs of a stroke.

Signs include the sudden numbness on one side of the face or body, slurred speech or the inability to walk in a straight line. He urges people to remember the acronym BE FAST:

- **B**—(sudden loss of) balance
- **E** —eyes (vision loss)
- **F** —face drooping
- **A** —arm weakness
- **S** —speech difficulty
- **T** —time to call 911

Neurologists say "time is brain," so the sooner patients get care, the earlier they can be treated and prevent long-term brain damage.

"If you're having a stroke, you still need to come in, we are still here for you," Lyden said in a Cedars-Sinai news release. "Time is still brain, and we still have great treatments. We can cure stroke. And we're here to keep doing that."

According to Dr. Michelle Kittleson, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai, symptoms of a [heart attack](#) include chest discomfort, shortness of

breath, palpitations, lightheadedness and fainting spells.

"If you're feeling these symptoms and you're not sure whether to go to the ER and risk being exposed to infection versus waiting it out at home, call your doctor," Kittleson said. "As physicians, we have a lot of great experience in teasing out the details of a patient's symptoms to triage whether the [symptom](#) is dangerous or not."

More information: For more on symptoms of heart attack and stroke, head to the [American Heart Association](#).

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