

OKLAHOMA FIGHTS BACK AGAINST STROKE!

Information sheet to accompany the *Stroke Heroes Act Fast* video

Stroke FAQ

- 1. What is a Stroke?** A stroke is a sudden “brain attack” that cuts off the blood flow and oxygen to the brain.
- 2. Types of Strokes:**
 - A. An ISCHEMIC stroke (85%) occurs when an artery is blocked by a build up of plaque, fatty deposits, or a blood clot.
 - B. The HEMMORHAGIC stroke (15%) happens when a blood vessel breaks leaking blood into the brain.
- 3. How does a stroke affect me?** Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the world and the leading cause of adult disability. There is one stroke every 45 seconds in the United States with a death from stroke every 3.3 minutes.
- 4. What do you mean disabled?** Stroke causes brain cells to die at the rate of 2 million cells per minute unless quickly reversed, the abilities in that area of the brain are lost. This can include loss of speech, paralysis of one or more limbs, difficulty in thought, and even difficulty in eating. 2/3 of all persons will have some type of disability, even if only a general weakness in an arm or leg.
- 5. So why does Oklahoma need to fight back?** Oklahoma has the honor of being #2 in the nation – this means there is only one state that has more strokes and deaths from strokes per year than Oklahoma. This is not football – it is NOT a good thing to be in the top TEN! Currently, there is one stroke every 67 minutes in Oklahoma with a death from a new stroke every 4 hours.
- 6. Who is at risk for a stroke? EVERYONE!** Stroke doesn't care who you are – it levels the playing field. ALL of us have some stroke risks, some we cannot change but some we can.
- 7. The film said to Act FAST – what does that mean?** FAST is a quick test to help detect stroke symptoms and get the person help.
 - F = FACE** *Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?*
 - A = Arms** *Ask the person to close their eyes and raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?*
 - S = Speech** *Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?*
 - T = Time** *If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1.*
- 8. OKAY – Stroke is bad, I get it. But the film said with emergency medical care a stroke victim can recover. What did you mean?** There is a three hour window that begins from the time the stroke victim FIRST shows signs of a stroke during which the stroke victim may be eligible to receive T-PA. T-PA can reduce the chances of dying or decrease the disability. The onset of stroke symptoms is when the patient experienced the first sign of a stroke or when the patient was last seen as normal. Confusing, right? If there is a witness to the change, mark down the time. If a person takes a nap beginning at 1 pm and wakes up with signs of a stroke at 2:30 pm, then the last time the person was normal was at 1 pm and that is the time to write down. DO NOT guess! Call 9-1-1 and tell them the person has had a stroke, the symptoms and when they began. DO NOT WAIT TO SEE IF THE SYMPTOMS GET BETTER. **Denial = Disability.** Call 9-1-1- immediately.

9. **Why can't I just put them in the car and take them?** The paramedics know what to do and which hospital to take the stroke victim to for emergency treatment. They can provide medical care that you can't.
10. **What do I do while I wait for the ambulance?** Gather all the information the hospital will need for the patient...identification, insurance cards, list of medications, etc. Stay with the patient for reassurance. Tell them what is happening. **DON'T GIVE THE PATIENT ANYTHING BY MOUTH...** no food, water, medication, nothing... **NOT EVEN AN ASPIRIN!**
11. **OKAY – back to the question – what can emergency medical care do?** When a stroke victim arrives in an emergency room, one of the first tests they are given is a CT scan of the brain to determine if they have had a stroke and what kind. Blood tests are also done along with an EKG. The doctors determine the course of treatment. If it is an ischemic stroke, and the stroke victim a candidate for T-PA, it can be given in the emergency room within the three hour window. T-PA is a 'clot buster' that can dissolve the clot and allow blood flow and oxygen back to the brain. With T-PA, disability can be decreased up to 50%.
12. **So I don't need to call 9-1-1 if it has been over 3 hours because there is nothing to be done?** Wrong! No matter what time the patient had first signs of a stroke, even if it was 3 days ago, get them to the hospital. Call 9-1-1. Without the CT scan and other tests, no one can tell if the patient had a stroke or there is another cause of the disability. There is still much that can be done for a stroke victim.
13. **Are there any other symptoms of stroke?** Yes – learn them and act FAST when they occur.
- A. Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg – especially on one side of the body.
 - B. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
 - C. Sudden severe headache with no known cause.
 - D. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
 - E. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
14. **If everyone is at risk, there is nothing I can do, right?** Wrong.
- Know your blood pressure and work with your doctor to control it if it is elevated. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke.
 - Control your diabetes. Follow your doctor's recommendations carefully. Diabetes puts you at risk for stroke.
 - If you drink alcohol, do it in moderation.
 - Add exercise daily. 30 minutes a day can improve your health in many ways and reduce risk.
 - If you smoke, stop. It doubles the risk.
 - Watching what and how much you eat. Cut down on salt and fat in your diet.

If you would like more information about stroke and the resources available, please call:

- Oklahoma State Department of Health at 1-888-669-5934
- American Heart Association at 1-888-4STROKES (787-6537)