# Strokes- Signs and Emergency Response Meeting Kit




## STROKES- SIGNS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SAFETY TALK

It is important to know the signs and symptoms of someone who is experiencing a stroke. Knowing the symptoms along with the proper emergency response is critical. Knowing this information can make all the difference in whether a victim of a stroke receives the medical attention they need to save their life.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE

- Sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm, or leg on one side of the body.
- Abrupt loss of vision, strength, coordination, sensation, speech, or the ability to understand speech.
- Sudden dimness of vision, especially in one eye.
- Sudden and severe headache with no other cause followed rapidly by loss of consciousness – indications of a stroke due to bleeding.
- Sudden loss of balance, possibly accompanied by vomiting, nausea, fever, hiccups, or trouble with swallowing.
- Brief loss of consciousness.
- Unexplained dizziness.

**OTHER RISK FACTORS FOR STROKE INCLUDE:**

- Smoking damages blood vessels, which can cause a stroke. About 1 in 6 men smoke. Men are also more likely to be smokers than women.
- Overweight and obesity. Having overweight or obesity increases stroke risk. About 3 in 4 men in the United States have overweight or obesity.
- Diabetes increases stroke risk because it can harm blood vessels in the brain. About 1 in 9 men have diabetes.
- Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure levels and increase the risk for stroke. It also increases levels of triglycerides, a form of fat in your blood that can harden your arteries. Men are more likely than women to drink too much alcohol.
- Not enough physical activity. Not getting enough physical activity can lead to other health conditions that can raise the risk for stroke. In 2017, fewer than 1 out of 3 men met the guidelines for aerobics and muscle strengthening.
- African American men at higher risk for stroke.

**PREVENTIONS/ PROTOCOLS**

**Know Your ABCS of Heart and Brain Health:**

**Aspirin:** Aspirin may help reduce your risk for stroke, but you should check with your doctor before taking aspirin, because it can make some types of stroke worse. Before taking aspirin, talk with your doctor about whether it is right for you.

**Blood pressure:** Control your blood pressure with healthy lifestyle changes. If a blood pressure medicine is prescribed, take it as directed.

**Cholesterol:** Manage your blood cholesterol with healthy lifestyle changes. If a cholesterol medicine is prescribed, take it as directed.

**Smoking:** Don’t start smoking. If you do smoke, learn how to quit.

**Make Lifestyle Changes**

**Eat healthy:** Choose healthy foods, including foods with less salt, or sodium, to lower your blood pressure and foods that are rich in fiber and whole grains to manage your cholesterol.

**Get regular physical activity:** Regular physical activity helps you reach and maintain a healthy weight and keeps your heart and blood vessels healthier. Adults age 18 and older should get at least 150 minutes (or 2 hours and 30 minutes) of physical activity each week and do muscle strengthening activities on two or more days each week.

**ACTING F.A.S.T. IS KEY FOR STROKE**

Acting **F.A.S.T**. can help stroke patients get the treatments they desperately need. The stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients may not be eligible for these if they don’t arrive at the hospital in time.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act **F.A.S.T.** and do the following simple test:

**F—Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A—Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S—Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

**T—Time:** If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

## FINAL WORD

Because of the sheer number of strokes each year, there is a good chance someone you know could experience one. Knowing what to look for when dealing with someone who is having a stroke is critical. You can be the difference in whether a victim gets the care they need quickly.