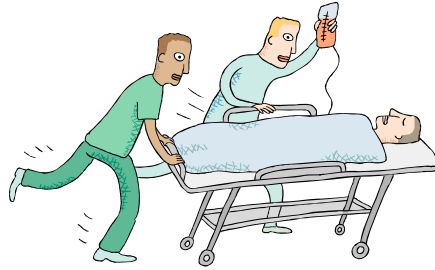


**The Kansas City Chronic Disease Coalition, The American Heart Association,  
and the American Stroke Association want you to know that  
a stroke is a medical emergency.**



**DID YOU KNOW?** A stroke is a brain attack! During a stroke, the brain is not getting any oxygen. That means the brain is starving minute-by-minute.

We frequently talk about the warning signs of stroke and ask you to teach them to others. Every second counts. If someone is having a stroke, there may be:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

You should call 9-1-1 immediately if you see any of these signs or symptoms.

However, we hear many stories of people who ignore those signs, thinking that they will go away on their own. We hear of people who lie down and take a nap, who call a friend to compare their symptoms with someone else, or who don't call 9-1-1 and drive themselves to a hospital instead. **EVERY SECOND COUNTS AND WE DON'T WANT YOU TO DELAY IN GETTING THE RIGHT CARE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, AT THE RIGHT PLACE!!**

So, please take the time to remember this simple quiz. It takes less than one minute to find out the answers. And in that time, you can save your own life or the life of someone you care about.

**ASK THE PERSON TO SMILE – If the person can't smile, there's a big problem. They may be having a stroke.**

**ASK THE PERSON TO RAISE BOTH ARMS AND KEEP THEM UP - If the person can't raise up their arms, there's a big problem. They may be having a stroke.**

**ASK THE PERSON TO SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE COHERENTLY - If the person can't speak to you properly, there's a big problem. They may be having a stroke.**

When you think someone is having a stroke, **immediately call 9-1-1.** Let the dispatcher know what you found out and ask them to send an ambulance immediately.

## **IF YOU HAVE HAD A STROKE, HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW!**

The brain is divided into four primary parts: the right hemisphere (or half), the left hemisphere, the cerebellum and the brain stem. When someone has had a stroke, their world may seem confusing, scary, or hostile. Stroke can rob people of the most basic methods of interacting with the world.

Did you know that one side of the brain controls the opposite side of the body? Here are some of the effects of stroke in either the left or right brain.

**Right-Hemisphere Stroke** - The right side of the brain controls the movement of the left side of the body. It also controls things like judging distance, size, speed, or position and seeing how parts are connected to wholes.

A stroke in the right side of the brain often causes paralysis in the left side of the body. Survivors of right-hemisphere strokes may also be unable to judge distances, leading to a fall. They may be unable to guide their hands to pick up an object, button a shirt, or tie their shoes. They may even be unable to tell right-side up from upside-down when trying to read. Survivors of right-hemisphere strokes may also "forget" or "ignore" objects or people on their left side. Some people will have problems with short-term memory. Although they may be able to recount a visit to the seashore that took place 30 years ago, they may be unable to remember what they ate for breakfast that morning.

**Left-Hemisphere Stroke** - The left hemisphere of the brain controls the movement of the right side of the body. It also controls speech and language abilities for most people. A left-hemisphere stroke often causes paralysis of the right side of the body.

Someone who has had a left-hemisphere stroke may also have a wide range of speech and language problems. Oddly enough, some survivors may have trouble talking but can easily read, write, or understand speech. Each person is different. For some, they may develop a slow and cautious behavioral style. They may need frequent instruction and feedback to complete tasks.

Finally, patients with left-hemisphere stroke may develop memory problems similar to those of right-hemisphere stroke survivors. These problems can include shortened retention spans, difficulty in learning new information, and problems in conceptualizing and generalizing.

**Cerebellar Stroke** - The cerebellum controls many of our reflexes and much of our balance and coordination. A stroke that takes place in the cerebellum can cause abnormal reflexes of the head and torso, coordination and balance problems, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting.

**Brain Stem Stroke** - Strokes that occur in the brain stem are especially devastating. The brain stem is the area of the brain that controls all of our involuntary "life-support" functions, such as breathing rate, blood pressure and heartbeat. The brain stem also controls abilities such as eye movements, hearing, speech, and swallowing. Since impulses generated in the brain's hemispheres must travel through the brain stem on their way to the arms and legs, patients with a brain stem stroke may also develop paralysis in one or both sides of the body.

After a stroke, many problems can improve over time. In some patients, they will go away completely. **It's important for stroke survivors to receive appropriate rehabilitation to help them be as healthy as possible.**

**For stroke information, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE.**