



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Newspaper

From: Alison Fegan, Health Educator

RE: Recognizing Stroke

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For a Stroke Think F.A.S.T.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America and a leading cause of adult disabilities. More than 795,000 people experience a stroke each year, and two times more women die from stroke each year than breast cancer. A stroke, also called a brain attack, is a blockage of blood flow to a part of the brain. It can cause permanent damage to the brain if the blood is not restored. When brain cells die during a stroke, abilities controlled by that area of the brain are lost. These abilities include: speech, movement, and memory. How a stroke patient is affected depends on where the stroke occurs in the brain and how much the brain is damaged. Some people recover completely from strokes, but more than 2/3 of survivors will have some type of disability.

As with other sudden illnesses, the primary signals of a stroke or mini-stroke are a sudden change in how the body is working or feeling. This usually includes sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg. Usually, weakness or numbness occurs only on one side of the body. In addition, the person may have difficulty talking or being understood, have blurred or dimmed vision or experience a sudden, severe headache; dizziness or confusion.

Would you be able to recognize stroke symptoms? The Central Michigan District Health Department urges everyone to become educated about how to prevent stroke and use the F.A.S.T. method to quickly recognize stroke symptoms and respond to them by calling 911. The F.A.S.T. method is a stroke screening tool that assesses facial expressions, arm movement and speech

function and urges timely response to symptoms by calling 911 or getting to the hospital immediately.

For a Stroke Think F.A.S.T.

- **Face** – Weakness on one side of the face. Ask the person to smile; this will show if there is drooping or weakness in the muscles on one side of the face.
- **Arm** – Weakness or numbness in one arm. Ask the person to raise both arms to find out if there is weakness in the limbs.
- **Speech** – Slurred speech or trouble getting the words out. Ask the person to speak a simple sentence to listen for slurred or distorted speech.
- **Time** – Time to call 9-1-1 if you see any of these signs. If a person has difficulty with any of these tasks or shows any other signals of a stroke, note the time the signals began and call 9-1-1 right away.

For more information about stroke and the National Stroke Association, visit www.stroke.org. This article was brought to you by the staff at Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves residents in the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org

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