

Salem Township Hospital Reminds Community to Act FAST when Stroke Signs Occur
Know the Signs, Call 911 Immediately
Quick Response is Crucial during ‘Brain Attack’

Salem Township Hospital has joined with the Mid America Stroke Network, founded by Saint Louis University Hospital, and has been a stroke-ready hospital since 2008.

How the Network Operates: A Step-by-Step Guide

- 1) A patient presenting with stroke symptoms arrives at Salem Township Hospital for treatment.
- 2) The emergency team performs a complete neurological assessment of the patient and administers the appropriate treatment.
- 3) The attending physician then determines that the patient requires further neurocritical care and calls the MidAmerica Stroke Network hotline to page the SLUCare neuro-specialist on-call for additional medical support.
- 4) After receiving the page, the SLUCare neuro-specialist consults with the Salem Township Hospital’s attending physician.
- 5) Then, the SLUCare neuro-specialist assesses the patient’s condition and vital signs in order to determine the appropriate treatment to help stabilize the patient.
- 6) If the collaborative medical team determines that the stroke patient’s condition cannot be effectively stabilized on-site at Salem Township Hospital, a rapid transport to Saint Louis University Hospital is arranged immediately.
- 7) The stroke patient promptly receives the necessary medical treatment upon arrival at Saint Louis University Hospital.
- 8) Saint Louis University Hospital then discharges the stabilized stroke patient back into the care of Salem Township Hospital for continued treatment and follow-up care.

Stroke, sometimes called a “brain attack,” is a leading cause of death and the leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States, though studies have shown few Americans know its signs and symptoms.¹

Every 40 seconds someone in the United States has a stroke and roughly every four minutes a person dies from stroke. Salem Township Hospital is taking steps to ensure the public recognizes the symptoms of stroke and knows to react quickly.

Strokes occur when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and vital nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or ruptures. When this occurs, part of the brain, is deprived of blood and oxygen, destroying millions of valuable nerve cells within minutes.

Treatment may be available if you get to the emergency room immediately upon recognition of stroke symptoms. The only medication available to treat a stroke must be given within the first 3 hours of the stroke onset. It has the proven ability to reduce or eliminate the disabilities that result from stroke. This is why calling 911 is so important because the window of opportunity for treatment narrows with each minute that passes. After 3 hours, surgery may be the only intervention and after about 6 hours, there is very little that can be done to alter the course of the stroke and the brain damage it causes.

Pact to Act Fast

Pact to Act Fast is a community campaign designed to help families, friends, and coworkers to talk about stroke BEFORE it happens. Just as we have a plan for a tornado or a fire, we need a plan for stroke. When it happens, it happens fast and the results can be devastating. The Pact to Act Fast for stroke asks that families and other groups discuss the importance of calling 911 immediately; even if the person having the stroke says not to call! The pact is designed to allow families and friends to discuss the need to call 911 before the emergency arises. Often during a stroke, the victim may be confused and frightened and therefore unwilling to agree to 911 being called. So, it is important to make a pact with family and others to agree when the signs of stroke appear, 911 must be called immediately.

"If you suspect a stroke, remember the word FAST – F-A-S-T", said Patty Emrick, Registered Nurse, "call 9-1-1 immediately because with stroke, time is brain!"

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 sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

T = TIME If you observe any of these signs (independently or together),
Call 9-1-1 immediately!

About Stroke

Stroke is a leading cause of death and serious, long-term disability in the United States. According to the American Stroke Association, approximately 795,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke each year, and 87 percent of these are ischemic strokes.¹ An acute ischemic stroke occurs when an obstruction, such as a blood clot, blocks blood flow to the brain. The obstruction deprives the brain of blood and oxygen, destroying valuable nerve cells in the affected area within minutes. The resulting damage can lead to significant disability including paralysis, speech problems and emotional difficulties.

Leading a healthy lifestyle, including lowering risk factors like high blood pressure and weight, can also help reduce your stroke risk.

For more information about stroke, visit www.strokeawareness.com

If your organization is interested in scheduling a speaker

Contact Kendra Taylor, Director of Emergency Department at ktaylor@sthcares.org

¹American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2011 Update*. Dallas, Texas: American Heart Association; 2010.