

Health Safety

City of Lockport Fire Department

STROKE FACT SHEET

Strokes are the third leading cause of deaths in the United States, behind heart disease and cancer. Each year over 500,000 Americans suffer from stroke, and of those, about 150,000 will die from them. Although as many as three million Americans have survived a stroke, more than two million of them have sustained permanent disability. Strokes may occur at any age, in both sexes, and in all races in every country in the world.

WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke, often called a Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA) or brain attack, is a loss of blood flow to an area of the brain which may result in disorientation, further injury, or even death. When blood flow ceases, brain cells are denied vital supplies of oxygen and nutrients. Some strokes may produce only a slightly recognizable effect, while others can quickly cause the loss of function of an arm or leg, or even death if coma results.

There are two major types of strokes: those caused by blood clots that block an artery to part of the brain (also known as ischemic strokes), and those caused by bleeding into the brain (hemorrhagic strokes).

New drug treatments are being tested that could help certain victims of stroke, but diagnosis and treatment must begin as soon as possible in order for these treatments to be effective.

In spite of their sudden occurrence, strokes can be prevented. This is accomplished by managing the risk factors, heeding the warning signs, and acting quickly. Today, early diagnosis and treatment can dramatically improve recovery for stroke victims.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT STROKE

Brain attacks and strokes are different. **FALSE**

Both brain attacks and strokes refer to the symptoms of a patient with an injury to the brain from a lack of blood flow or from bleeding. Both are usually the result of a progressive disease that develops over many years.

Strokes always result in serious disability. **FALSE**

Some stroke symptoms may last anywhere from a few moments to a few hours, then disappear. These brief episodes of stroke symptoms are known as transient ischemic attacks or TIA's and are often warning signs of a serious stroke. Although TIA's are usually of a short duration with full recovery, their seriousness should not be underestimated. Treatment must be sought immediately at the onset even the mildest symptoms.

Treatable Risk Factors

- High Blood Pressure
- Cigarette Smoking
- Diabetes
- Transient Ischemic Attacks
- Atrial Fibrillation and other heart disease

Prevention

- Control blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Stop smoking
- Control sugar if diabetic
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly

Stroke Warning Signs

- Numbness, weakness, or paralysis of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden blurred or loss of vision on one side of the visual field or in one eye
- Slurred speech or difficulty saying or understanding simple statements
- Loss of balance or coordination

If Warning Signs Showing

- Dial 911 immediately in order to get them to hospital quickly
- Do not give anything to eat or drink
- Support and protect affected arm or leg
- Remain calm
- Ensure patient is comfortable