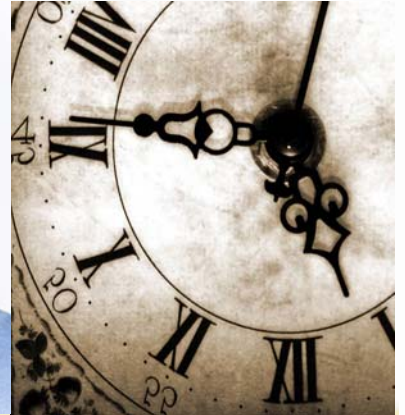
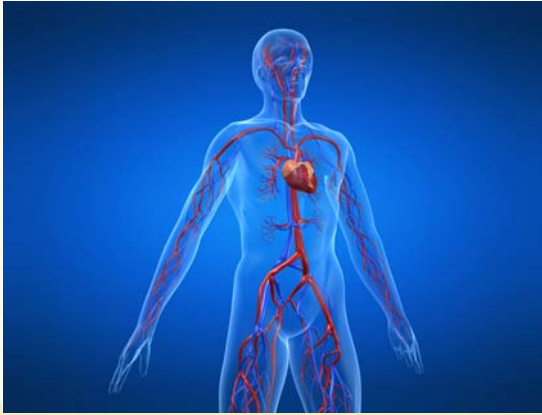


The Wellness News

Issue 16. February, 2009



Warning Signs of Stroke

What is a stroke?

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America and the No. 1 cause of adult disability. That's why it's important to know the warning signs and understand how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur.

Stroke is a type of cardiovascular disease that affects the blood vessels that supply blood to the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that brings oxygen and nutrients to the brain either bursts (hemorrhagic stroke) or is clogged by a blood clot or some other mass (ischemic stroke). When a rupture or blockage occurs, part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs and begins to die. Without oxygen, nerve cells in the affected area of the brain can't work properly and die within minutes. This has major debilitating effects on the body, which are often permanent because dead brain cells aren't replaced.

Since each type of stroke has a different type of treatment, it is very important for the physician to determine the cause of the stroke, as well as the location, as quickly as possible.

What are the signs of stroke?

- Sudden numbness/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

If the symptoms last for more than 10 to 15 minutes, appear frequently or seem to get worse, ask the emergency responders for urgent transportation to the nearest appropriate emergency medical facility.

The Wellness News

More...

What to do if you or someone you know is suffering from symptoms of stroke:

- If you're with someone who may be having stroke symptoms, immediately call 9-1-1 or the EMS. Expect the person to protest — denial is common. Don't take "no" for an answer. Insist on taking prompt action. Responding to the warning signs of stroke as soon as they appear gives the patient the best chance for an optimal recovery.
- Not all the warning signs occur in every stroke. Don't ignore signs of stroke, even if they go away!
- Check the time. When did the first warning sign or symptom start? You'll be asked this important question later.

What are "mini-strokes"?

A TIA or transient ischemic attack is a "warning stroke" or "mini-stroke" that produces stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage. TIAs can occur days, weeks or even months before a stroke. Recognizing and treating TIAs can reduce your risk of a major stroke. The usual TIA symptoms are the same as those of stroke, only temporary. The short duration of these symptoms and lack of permanent brain injury is the main difference between TIA and stroke.

Be prepared for an emergency

- Keep a list of emergency rescue service numbers next to the telephone and in your pocket, wallet or purse.
- Find out which area hospitals are primary stroke centers that have 24-hour emergency stroke care.
- Know (in advance) which hospital or medical facility is nearest your home or office.



Adapted from the American Heart Association, the American Stroke Association and the Stanford School of Medicine.

Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320