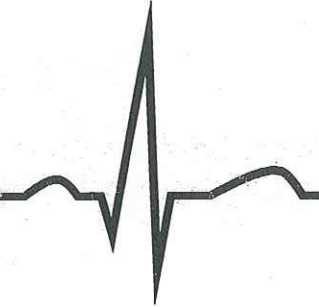


# Your Health MATTERS



## What is a brain attack?

*This monthly column provides health information for you and your family. Employee Health Services, HealthWorks and Epidemiology share their expertise and tap into other Beaumont departments to help you make well-informed health decisions.*

Most of us are familiar with the warning signs of a heart attack, but how many of us know the warning signs of a brain attack? A brain attack is a stroke and like a heart attack, it is a medical emergency.

According to the American Heart Association, every 53 seconds, someone in America has a stroke. About 600,000 Americans will have a stroke this year and 160,000 of them will die. In fact, stroke is our nation's number three killer, and

one of the leading causes of disability.

You can head off a brain attack by remembering the three Rs: *reduce* the risk of a stroke, *recognize* the signs of a stroke and *respond* immediately to a stroke.

According to the American Heart Association, you are at greatest risk of having a stroke if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, a history of transient ischemic attacks (TIAs, or "mini strokes") or a combination of these. The following tips can help you **reduce your risk** of a stroke: check your blood pressure, don't smoke cigarettes, recognize and treat diabetes, don't drink too much alcohol, eat a healthy diet, be physically active, and have regular medical check ups.

It is important to be able to **recognize the warning signs** because a stroke demands

immediate emergency medical care. Warning signs of a stroke include: a 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; a loss of balance or coordination; sudden, and/or severe headaches with no known cause.

To minimize complications, increase the odds of a speedy recovery, and perhaps save a life, **respond immediately** to stroke! If you or someone you know shows the symptoms of a stroke, seek immediate medical care by calling 911. However, if the fastest way to get the person to the hospital is to drive them, then do so. It is best to go to the nearest medical facility with 24-hour emergency care.

If you would like to find out if you are at risk of a stroke, stop by the Employee Services Center and pick up an American Heart Association "Are you at Risk of a Brain Attack" quiz.

If you or someone you know had or is at risk of a stroke, contact Stroke Connection at **1-800-553-6321** or **strokeconnection@heart.org**.