

NATIONAL STROKE AWARENESS MONTH – MAY 2012

May is National Stroke Awareness Month. The aim of the National Stroke Awareness Month is to help individuals ‘Save A Life’ by educating them about stroke risk factors, stroke symptoms and stroke preventative measures. It places emphasis on making the public aware about **ACTING FAST**. According to the National Stroke Association, a person experiencing a stroke can be treated if people have acted **FAST** – 80% of strokes can also be prevented.

F A S T – stands for things to check in a suspected stroke victim.

F – Face - Does the face droop on one side when the person smiles?

A – Arm – After raising both arms, does one of the arms drift downwards?

S – Speech - After repeating a simple phrase, does the person’s speech sound slurred or strange?

T – Time – If any or all of the above are observed, call 911 (or 999 in UK) and ask for medical assistance

Tips for preventing Stroke

1. STOP SMOKING - smoking doubles risk for stroke.
2. Get regular treatment for conditions that can increase risk of stroke such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and Atrial Fibrillation.
3. Recognize and treat TIA's (Transient Ischemic Attacks). TIA's are temporary episodes of stroke like symptoms that normally cause no permanent damage. However, around 40% of people who experience TIA's may experience Stroke.
4. Your health care provider may prescribe medicines to reduce your risk of Stroke or recurrent Stroke. If so, follow the prescribed treatment regimen.
5. Recognizing warning signs and acting quickly is vital. There is a medication that, if administered within 3 hours of the onset of Stroke symptoms, may prevent long term disability from Stroke.

Living after a stroke - Steps Against Recurrent Stroke (STARS)

Caregivers play a prominent role throughout the post-stroke recovery process. Caring for stroke survivors at home can cause high levels of emotional, mental and physical stress. In addition to distress, the disruption of employment and family life makes care giving very challenging.

Family caregivers can promote positive post-stroke recovery outcomes; however, they need to care for themselves as well. Caregivers will sometimes recognize the need for help and will consider using licensed home care providers such as HisGrip Home Care to provide additional help. HisGrip Home Care has experienced caregivers who are available to provide help at home including respite for caregivers for as little as three hours at a time. This break and extra care is valuable to assist in living after a stroke.

Additional help may include:

- Assisting with doctor's appointments, medications, and exercises.
- Assist the stroke survivor with daily activities such as personal care and hygiene.
- Provide the stroke survivor with physical, mental and emotional support.
- Plan out the stroke survivor's care, including setting routines and managing the care team.

You may find additional information and other resources at: National Stroke Association (www.stroke.org) and Grady's Marcus Stroke and Neuroscience Center (www.gradystroke.org)

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