

Five F.A.S.T. things you should know about stroke



May is American Stroke Month

DOUGLAS COUNTY, NV (May 11) – You don't need superpowers to be a hero when it comes to stroke, you just need to pay attention to the risk factors and know the warning signs.

"Stroke is largely preventable and treatable," said Ivan Lopez, M.D., Director of the Neurology Department at Renown and the School of Medicine at the University of Nevada Reno and member of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Northern Nevada Board of Directors. "The best way to beat a stroke is to never have one – about 80 percent of strokes are preventable. The second best way to beat a stroke is to identify one immediately when it occurs and call 911."

For American Stroke Month this May, the American Stroke Association's *Together to End Stroke* offers five things everyone should know to be a Stroke Hero and stop the nation's No. 5 killer in its tracks.

1. Anyone Can Have a Stroke (Even Superheroes)

Some stroke patients don't "look the part" and they may not have traditional stroke risk factors like high blood pressure. Stroke is more common in older people, but young adults and teens can also be victims.

2. High Blood Pressure is Public Enemy # 1 for Stroke

About 80 million Americans have high blood pressure, yet about half with the condition do not have it under control. Three out of four people who have a first stroke report blood pressure higher than 140/90 mm Hg, making blood pressure the most important controllable risk factor for stroke.

3. Stroke is the leading cause of preventable disability

Stroke is also a leading cause of long-term disability. In fact, stroke is more disabling than it is fatal. The estimated direct medical cost of stroke is \$17.2 billion per year. This includes hospital outpatient or office-based provider visits, hospital inpatient stays, ED visits, prescribed medicines and home health care

4. Stroke is Largely Treatable

Clot-busting drugs and medical devices like stent retrievers have made stroke largely treatable, but most patients need to get to an appropriate hospital to be evaluated and treated within 3 to 4.5 hours of the first symptom. With nearly 2 million brain cells dying every minute during a stroke, there's no time to phone a friend, take a nap, or wait until Uber stops surging. Calling 911 is the best call for stroke.

5. **Friends Usually Save Friends from Stroke**

You've heard the saying "Fast friends". If you're having a stroke, that's exactly who you need nearby. Two out of three times, it's a bystander making the decision to call 911 or seek treatment on behalf of someone suffering a stroke. To remember the most common stroke warning signs and what action to take, learn **F.A.S.T.** If you see **F**-Face drooping, **A**-Arm weakness or **S**-Speech difficulty, it's **T**-Time to call 911.

Dave Fogerson, Deputy Fire Chief of East Fork Fire District, knows all too well how friends can save friends from stroke. When he suffered a stroke, his colleagues recognized the warning signs and rushed to get him treatment.

"If it weren't for them, I may not have survived," said Fogerson.

Within the next month East Fork Fire will unveil a new stroke protocol in conjunction with Carson Valley Medical Center. This protocol allows EMS providers to draw the patient's labs on route to the hospital so the patient can go directly to the CT scanner upon arrival.

"Once the CT scan is complete, doctors will be able to quickly assess and treat the patient accordingly," said Fogerson.

During the 2015 legislative session, Senate Bill 196 was passed. This law provides the state with essential data for improving stroke care and patient outcomes by requiring the Division of Public and Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and maintain a statewide stroke database, known as a registry. In addition, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health will adopt and carry out procedures for utilizing the registry in collaboration with statewide partners to improve quality of care for stroke patients and compile an annual report to be hosted online.

"Both SB 196 and the new East Fork Fire stroke protocol are part of nationwide efforts to improve the system of care that have led to significant reductions in stroke deaths and faster, effective treatment," said Rick Casazza, Board Chair, American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Northern Nevada.

The American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, launched *Together to End Stroke* in 2013 to elevate the message that stroke is largely preventable, treatable and beatable. For more information about becoming a stroke hero in Northern Nevada, call 775-322-7065.

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About the American Stroke Association

The American Stroke Association is devoted to saving people from stroke — the No. 2 cause of death in the world and a leading cause of serious disability. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat stroke. The Dallas-based association was created in 1997 as a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-888-4STROKE or visit strokeassociation.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).