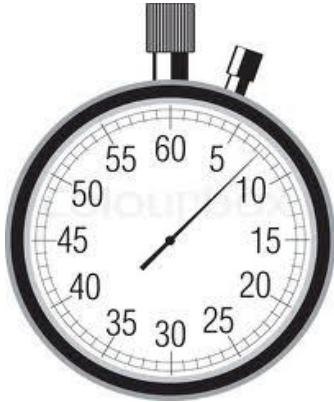




Stroke Association
of Southern California



Call 911 - Every Minute Counts

During a stroke, time is brain and every minute counts. Death of brain cells begin with the first symptoms and will continue until the patient receives hospital and stroke center care.

When a stroke occurs, with each minute of delay, the brain loses 1.9 million neurons, 14 billion synapses, and 7.5 miles of myelinated fibers.



Warning
Closing
Door

A major factor stroke care is time to treatment. Recognition of symptoms, the call to 911, hospital transit, assessment, MRI or CAT scan, diagnosis, treatment decisions and critical care all take valuable time.

In regard to time, think minutes. The much publicized treatment window for stroke defines when care is too late and can't succeed and not when it should begin. There may be a window, but the door to recovery closes fast.

Frequently, 911 is not called because symptoms don't seem serious or are thought to have another cause. Call for help even if you are not sure it's a stroke. Let the doctors make the diagnosis.



Paramedics and Stroke Centers in Los Angeles are ready 24/7 to provide advanced stroke treatment, but for those specialized skills, medications and equipment to be of value, we all must recognize the symptoms of stroke and call 911 immediately.



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Call 911 Immediately

The public's role in case of stroke

Stroke is caused by interruption of circulation to the brain. Ischemia or blockage of blood flow is the most common cause (88%) of stroke. Essential treatment is to rapidly restore flow of blood and oxygen. There are now dramatically effective treatments. If you call 911 and the patient is taken to an accredited stroke center, the injuries of stroke may be stopped, reduced or reversed.



Robert Levy received care promptly at a stroke center. Melodee Cole did not.

When given promptly in the hospital, according to guidelines for ischemic stroke, tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) can dissolve blood clots. "Patients treated with tPA were at least 30 percent more likely to have minimal or no disability at three months," NEJM Vol. 333:1581-88, Dec 1995

Also, blood flow restoration devices have "proved effective at removing a clot and restoring blood flow in 61 percent of patients." UCLA Vital Signs, Summer 2012

While there is a well-publicized window within which treatments must be administered, the window defines the time at which treatment will no longer succeed, not when it should begin. Brain cells begin to die at the onset of stroke and time is required for emergency treatment, a CAT scan or MRI, and comprehensive stroke care, so call 911 immediately when there are signs and symptoms of stroke.

Delay in treatment often occurs because stroke symptoms do not trigger sufficient alarm. When we have severe pain, trouble breathing or bleeding, we call for help. In stroke, initial signs and symptoms are often not recognized as serious and can be misinterpreted as migraine, fatigue, stress, or intoxication, so learn the signs and symptoms of stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, leg, or one side of the body
- Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding
- Sudden confusion and disorientation
- Sudden change or loss of vision
- Sudden dizziness, unsteadiness or falls
- Severe headache with unknown cause
- In case of a TIA or "mini-stroke," seek help even if signs and symptoms go away
- If you are not sure it's a stroke, call 911. Let experts make the diagnosis

The Joint Commission, the American Stroke Association and the National Stroke Association all recommend that that 911 is called and patients are taken to a certified stroke center immediately.