

# Homework Help – Strokes

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## Warning Signs of Stroke & Dealing with Emergencies

There may be no reason to expect an emergency, but that's the way of emergencies – no one expects them. So it's important to have a plan all thought out in advance. If you're the one in charge (and kids often are!) it will be important for you to keep your cool. The patient will be frightened enough.

### What is a stroke?

A stroke happens when brain cells don't get oxygen-rich blood from the heart. Without oxygen, the brain cells die or are damaged. This means the brain can't send orders to the rest of the body.

**A stroke is a medical emergency!** Recognize and respond immediately to the warning signs of stroke. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately. This can really improve survival and recovery.

If a person goes to a hospital right away (within three hours of experiencing warning signs), a doctor can give them medication or operate on them. This can reduce damage to the brain. It's really important to act quickly and get help right away.

### What are the warning signs of a stroke?

Strokes can be treated. That's why it is so important to recognize and respond to the warning signs.

- **Weakness** - Sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if it's only temporary.
- **Trouble speaking** - Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if it's only temporary.
- **Vision problems** - Sudden trouble with vision, even if it's only temporary.
- **Headache** - Sudden severe and unusual headache.
- **Dizziness** - Sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs.

Note that all of the warning signs are "sudden". They are serious, even if they are temporary and last a short time.

**If you experience any of these symptoms, CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.**

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## What should you do if you (or someone else) has the warning signs of a stroke?

- CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately [see Calling 9-1-1 sheet]. Do NOT wait for the symptoms to go away.
- Do NOT eat or drink anything.
- Do NOT take any medications, unless your doctor tells you.