Don’t Miss a Stroke

Learn the Warning Signs of Stroke F.A.S.T.—Don’t Wait to Call 9-1-1

Lesson Plan

Call To Action
Learn the Warning Signs of Stroke F.A.S.T.—Don’t Wait to Call 9-1-1

Community Need
Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death in the U.S.:
- About 800,000 Americans each year suffer a stroke.
- Stroke kills nearly 130,000 Americans a year.
- On average, every 4 minutes someone dies of stroke.
- African-Americans have higher stroke death rates compared to all other races.

Stroke is a disease that affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. It occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts (or ruptures). When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs. The brain cells die.

African-Americans are at higher risk—46 percent of men and 48 percent of women have some form of heart disease or stroke. And, stroke is a common cause of death among American Indians and Alaska Natives.

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the sudden signs of stroke. When you can spot the signs, you’ll know that you need to call 9-1-1 for help right away. F.A.S.T. is:
- Face Drooping.
- Arm Weakness.
- Speech Difficulty.
- Time to call 9-1-1.

If you’re having a stroke, it’s critical that you get medical attention right away. This helps to shorten the time of brain damage. Immediate treatment may also minimize the long-term effects of a stroke. And, even prevent death.

“Don’t Miss a Stroke” helps your community members to learn about stroke, the warning signs, and how to act F.A.S.T. when someone is having a stroke. It also reviews steps to help prevent stroke.
Three Important Points
Our lives are busy and many of us are on information overload. That’s why we focus on three key health messages:

- Embrace Life’s Simple 7® to reduce your risk for stroke.
- Learn the warning signs of a stroke F.A.S.T. (Face. Arm. Speech. Time.)
- Think you’re having a stroke? Call 9-1-1. The sooner you get medical help, the better the outcome.

EmPowered To Serve Health Check
The EmPowered To Serve Health Check is a way for community members to develop an awareness about their blood pressure and current weight. The goal is to get at least 15 percent of your community organization checking these health measures. And, with it in hand, to complete the My Life Check® personal health assessment using your group’s unique URL.

There are many ways you can conduct this optional EmPowered To Serve health check:

- Before the program, ask participants to check their blood pressure and weight at home, Higi Station (portable health kiosk) or at their doctor’s office.
- Provide a scale and blood pressure machine on site. Ask participants to check their weight and blood pressure before the program gets under way.
- Invite a local healthcare provider or partner with a healthcare organization to check blood pressure and weight for participants at the start of the program.
- If you can host a screening, try to offer blood glucose and cholesterol checks, too.

Length of Program

- Budget 1 – 1½ hours to present the lesson.
- If you are conducting a health screening, add 20 minutes or more before the meeting for participants to get their blood pressure and weight checked.

Program Materials

*No Access to a Slide Projector? Print out the slides and put them in a three-ring binder. Use the printed slides as a script to deliver your health lesson.*

- Flip chart and markers.
- Handouts (one copy per participant):
  - Stroke: Prevent, Treat, and Beat Infographic.
  - Let’s Talk About Stroke, TIA and Warning Signs.
  - Let’s Talk About Risk Factors for Stroke.
  - Let’s Talk About High Blood Pressure and Stroke.
  - Let’s Talk About Lifestyle Changes to Prevent Stroke.
- Pens
- Goody bags: Reach out to local businesses such as hospitals, wellness centers, local clinics and other health organizations. Ask them about donating giveaways for participants. Also check out the American Heart Association store (shop.heart.org) for brochures to buy in bulk.
Audiovisual Needs
- Projector for PowerPoint slides.
- Internet connection (optional).

Wrap-Up
Reminder! Once your participants have left, be sure to complete the Ambassador Questionnaire. For details, see your Ambassador Guide page 11.

Slide Program with Talking Points and Discussion Questions
The “Notes” section of the PowerPoint slides includes scripted comments for the lesson. Use this to help walk through the lesson. To engage participants, the talking points also include potential discussion questions. For your reference, below is a list of the discussion questions:

- Do you know anyone who has had a stroke?
- Does anyone know what causes a stroke?
- Have you heard of Life’s Simple 7?
- Do you try to live by Life’s Simple 7?
- Let’s do a shout out. The warning signs of a stroke are F.A.S.T.
  - F for _________.
  - A for _________.
  - S for _________.
  - T for _________.
- If someone has the F.A.S.T. warning signs, what should you do?
- What’ the first word in each of the bulleted list of other symptoms?
- If you notice someone has these symptoms, what should you do?
- Has anyone had to call 9-1-1 for emergency care?
- What do you recall about the experience?
- What are the warning signs of stroke?
- How long should you wait before calling 9-1-1?