

**I Might Be
Having a
Stroke.**

Should I Call 911?

AS SEEN IN

GOOD
HOUSEKEEPING

woman's day

In some cases, the first signs that someone is experiencing a stroke can be subtle: fatigue, lightheadedness, headaches, or tingling sensations. In other cases, the red flags are clear: sudden loss of vision, slurred speech, intense numbness or weakness, and abrupt confusion. What's important to remember is that in all stroke cases, getting medical care quickly is critical.

"Time is brain" is more than a catchy slogan designed to build awareness about stroke response and treatment. It underscores the fact that every single minute counts when a patient is experiencing a stroke. Every minute that passes without adequate blood and oxygen flow to the brain equates to thousands of destroyed brain cells. And that is why it is important to call 911 immediately if you believe you or your loved one is experiencing a stroke.

"When emergency responders arrive and assess a stroke patient, they

immediately begin collecting and sharing information with us so that we can prepare for the patient and put plans in place to expedite their care, before they even arrive to the emergency department," says Bobbi Cole, BSN, RN, CCRN-K, stroke coordinator at Beebe Healthcare. "These steps cannot take place if the patient drives in and presents in the ER waiting room. We lose valuable minutes, and that greatly impacts a patient's ability to survive, recover, and resume normal functionality following a stroke."

When a 911 call comes in for a potential stroke, first responders are trained to assess the patient using the Rapid Arterial Occlusion Evaluation (RACE). This rapid and sensitive pre-hospital exam scores a patient's response to a series of tasks and questions and generates a score between zero and nine. A score greater than five indicates a high probability the patient is suffering from a large vessel occlusion (LVO)

and helps first responders prioritize next steps for the patient in collaboration with the hospital Command Center.

At Beebe, the goal is to get an acute stroke patient from "door to needle" in 45 to 60 minutes. The "needle" is an intravenous (IV) medication called Tissue Plasminogen Activator (Alteplase), which helps dissolve the blood clot causing the stroke symptoms and restores blood flow to the affected area of the brain. The goal is to minimize permanent disability caused by a stroke and improve the patient's outcome. However, Alteplase is not suitable for everyone and has a narrow treatment window based on the time symptoms started, which is why it is important to call 911 and be evaluated by emergency responders quickly.

Beebe is designated as a Primary Stroke Center, which means it has both resources and processes in place to care for acute stroke patients. Beebe partners with Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia to provide high-quality, safe, and effective care to patients suffering from acute stroke.

"Beebe has the right systems in place to streamline care for stroke patients and assure they have the best possible outcomes," says Cole. "Education is an important part of what we do, and the message we stress over and over is to not delay in getting to the emergency room when signs of stroke present. Call 911, because the quicker you get here, the quicker we can help you and minimize the long-term impact of stroke."



Learn more about Beebe Healthcare's stroke program at beebehealthcare.org/services/neurology-stroke

How To Spot a Stroke

B.E. F.A.S.T.



Loss of Balance



Eyes (Blurred Vision)



Face Drooping



Arm Weakness



Speech Difficulties



Time to Call 911