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May 2017

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a Stroke  
**F.A.S.T.!**

**Health, Wealth, & Happiness**

Stroke Awareness Issue

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# Our Mission

Your Health, Wealth & Happiness explores the truth and facts within and beyond the confines of your health, personal wealth, and individual happiness. We have one goal; to bring you the information you need to live a healthy, wealthy, and happy life. We find simple tricks to improve your health, and long term goals to stay on top of it. In the new age of ever expanding technology, there is an unending supply of new recipes, health care improvements, new operations, machines, vaccines, cures, research, even robots, and more. Keeping on top of Your HWH is crucial to living the best life possible. Cheers to growing a more healthy, wealthy, and happy lifestyle.

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# Signs & Symptoms of a Stroke

By Tariq U. Azam, MD

A stroke is a medical condition in which blood supply is interrupted to part of the brain, leading a variety of symptoms. There are two categories of stroke. An ischemic stroke, which is when there is a lack of blood flow through one or more of the blood vessels supplying the brain. A hemorrhagic stroke, in which there is bleeding into the brain caused by a ruptured blood vessel.

The symptoms of stroke depend on where in the brain the stroke occurred. The most common symptoms are weakness in the body or facial muscles, numbness, severe headache, difficulty speaking, or vision loss.

There are many diseases and conditions that can put a person at risk for stroke. Irregular blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking tobacco, and a heart condition called atrial fibrillation place people at high risk. Controlling these conditions and stopping any smoking are key in reducing risk.

If caught early, meaning in the first few hours after a stroke starts, there are medications that can

be administered to try to prevent permanent damage from a stroke. If these cannot be used, medications like aspirin can be used to prevent additional strokes.

After a person has a stroke, they can have permanent disabilities from it. Some patients may even die from a stroke or its complications. That is why early recognition and prevention are so important.

The most important thing for stroke care is recognizing strokes early. A common and useful tool is the F-A-S-T acronym. F-A-S-T stands for:

**The most common symptoms are weakness in the body or muscles of the face, numbness, severe headache, difficulty speaking, or vision loss.**

**F - Facial drooping  
A - Arm weakness  
S - Speech difficulty  
T - Time to call emergency services**

For more information, please discuss with your physician. The above is informational material only and does not constitute medical advice.



**Sonya Noor,  
MD, FACS**

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# Recent Technological Advancements for Stroke Patients

By Daniel Azzinaro, Staff Writer

800,000 people in the United States have a stroke per year. Strokes, which cause brain damage, are a major cause of death and disability in the US. Most survivors have some type of disability, and at least half are affected severely enough to require exceptional care or to stay at a long-term care facility. For these reasons, an increasing number of researchers are pursuing the use of innovative technologies to improve the efficacy of rehabilitation. Over the last decade, many devices for robotic-assisted training have been developed to allow patients to perform early, intensive, and task-oriented exercises. Among the newest therapeutic tools used for stroke victims are robotic exoskeletons, which attach directly to the affected part of the body to facilitate or enable movement.

Robotic exoskeletons are well suited to therapy, since the support can be taken away gradually as patients improve, says Karen Nolan. Karen is a senior research scientist at the nonprofit Kessler Foundation, a West Orange, N.J. research and charitable institution for people with disabilities. Exoskeletons also may relieve physical therapists of having to manually move the patients, so they can focus on the quality of the movements instead, says Dr. Nolan.

Another approach, tele-rehabilitation, aims to increase the amount of therapy stroke patients get by making supervised rehabilitation available at home, and making it fun at the same time. One system, developed by Steven Cramer, a University of California, Irvine, professor, and his team, integrates low-cost electronic videogame plug-ins.

Researchers are still determining how to match each patient with the technology he or she would benefit most from, depending on the nature and severity of the injury. Canadian clinical guidelines, for instance, recommend robotic exoskeletons for the shoulder and elbow, but not for the wrist and hand, based on patient outcomes seen in a review of research. There's also a question about how insurers will cover treatments in this growing field. Not all new products are available for patient in-home use, and some concerns remain about the effectiveness of those that are.

Differently from other fields of engineering, studies about the effectiveness of these technologies often occur after

their development and their insertion in the rehabilitation settings. Several studies displayed the usefulness of these new technological approaches, whereas others did not show any improvement in respect to conventional therapies. This uncertainty about efficacy, together with high purchase cost for some of these devices, causes some difficulties in their use by untrained staff. The absence of clear guidelines about better dosage and parameter values to select a somewhat diffused skepticism by some members of the rehabilitation teams may limit the transfer of recent technologies from research laboratories to clinical settings, where patients are waiting to benefit from them.

## Stroke Awareness Word Search

Now that you have discovered vital information about strokes, it's time to put your knowledge to the test! Find the various terms in the word search below. Words will be forward, backward, and diagonal.

E	M	E	R	G	E	N	C	Y	I	W	E
D	A	W	A	R	E	N	E	S	S	K	K
R	S	R	F	N	N	E	G	Y	X	O	O
O	E	I	N	O	F	A	S	T	B	L	R
O	E	O	S	I	N	P	H	R	B	A	T
P	C	L	O	T	C	C	A	N	F	C	S
I	C	Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	S	I	D
N	A	L	L	D	N	B	L	O	O	D	S
G	S	S	E	N	K	A	E	W	G	E	S
F	L	O	W	O	U	M	G	K	R	M	G
N	M	T	O	C	D	H	C	E	E	P	S
S	I	S	Y	L	A	R	A	P	Y	V	X

Awareness  
Blood  
Brain  
Clot  
Condition

Disability  
Drooping  
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FAST  
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Paralysis  
Speech  
Stroke  
Weakness

**Check your answers in next month's issue!**

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# Knowing the Signs Will Save a Life

By Mary Siwinski, RN

May is Stroke Awareness month. As a Registered Nurse in a Neurosurgical Intensive Care unit, I can be heard explaining signs of a stroke to anyone near me. Knowing that someone I have spoken to is able to recognize stroke symptoms and have the knowledge to seek emergency medical assistance as quickly as possible is very important to me. Never did I realize how important my teaching was until May 25, 2015. The day my mother suffered a stroke.

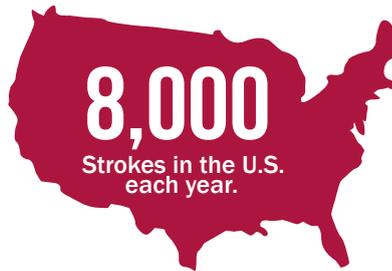
My parents had just enjoyed a Memorial Day barbecue at home. My mother had not been feeling well all day and said she was going to take a nap. My father asked her a question and when she didn't respond, he noticed her slumped over in her chair. Quickly, he went through the signs of a stroke I had taught him. Within minutes, he called 911 and my mother was transported to the hospital, where she received the intervention that would save her life.

## STROKES CAN HAPPEN AT ANY AGE

GET THE FACTS  
KNOW THE SIGNS

### WHAT IS A STROKE?

A stroke, sometimes called a "brain attack" occurs when blood flow to an area of the brain is cut off.



1 IN 6 WILL SUFFER A STROKE AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIFE



### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sudden weakness or numbness of face, arm or leg, usually one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, difficulty speaking, or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing.
- Sudden loss of balance or coordination, trouble walking, dizziness.
- Sudden severe headache with unknown cause.

### SPOT A STROKE F.A.S.T

**F** FACE

Ask the person to smile.  
Does one side of their face droop?



**A** ARMS

Ask the person to raise both arms.  
Does one arm drift downward?



**S** SPEECH

Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase.  
Is their speech slurred or strange?



**T** TIME

If you observe any of these signs,  
call 9-1-1 immediately!



### ACTIONS

- Call 9-1-1 (activate EMS).
- If unresponsive and not breathing, or only gasping, begin CPR
- Protect the airway. If secretions are present, place in recovery position.
- Be calm and reassuring
- Tell EMS and doctors when symptoms began.

8 out of 10 strokes are ischemic strokes, which means a blood clot has formed in one of the arteries of the brain. Tissue Plasminogen Activator or TPA is given to dissolve the clot and spare further damage to the affected area. It must be given within 3 hours of when the symptoms occurred for optimal effect. This medication and surgical intervention if needed offers the best chance of recovery for an individual who has suffered a stroke.

Understanding F.A.S.T. is the key to knowing the signs of a stroke. F.A.S.T. stands for Facial drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, and Time to call 911. Other symptoms can include difficulty walking or a sudden severe headache. Time is brain, please take a minute to educate yourself on recognizing the signs and symptoms of a stroke. My father did, and it saved my mother's life.

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# Stroke Statistics

By Lauren Antkowiak, Staff Writer

According to the Stroke Center:

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States. More than 140,000 people die each year from stroke in the US.
- Stroke is the leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the US.
- Nearly three-quarters of all strokes occur in people over the age of 65. The risk of having a stroke more than doubles each decade after the age of 55.
- Strokes can and do occur at any age. Nearly one-fourth of strokes occur in people under the age of 65.
- High blood pressure is the most important risk factor for stroke.

According to the CDC:

- Someone in the US has a stroke every 40 seconds.
- Nearly 1 in 4 strokes are in people who have had a previous stroke.
- About 87% of all strokes are ischemic strokes, in which blood flow to the brain is blocked.
- High cholesterol and smoking are leading causes of stroke. Two thirds of America's have at least one of these conditions or habits.

According to strokesmart.org:

- Some stroke survivors are locked-in after a stroke. Locked-in syndrome is a rare condition that most often occurs after a basilar artery stroke. A basilar artery stroke is considered the most devastating stroke, especially if someone survives from it. People who have had a basilar artery stroke can have paralysis from head to toe, hence where the term "locked-in" came from.

According to sciencedaily.com:

- One in three Americans can't name even a single stroke warning sign.
- Time is brain. During a stroke, 32,000 brain cells per second (1.9 million per minute) die. But if a patient receives timely treatment, the damage can be minimized.

According to goredforwomen.org:

- About 40 percent of stroke deaths occur in males, and 60 percent in females.

According to verywell.com:

- Over 43% of people over 85 have suffered a silent stroke.



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# Stroke Finances

By Tehniyet Azam, Staff Writer

Diseases like heart attack, stroke, spinal injury are something that will come unannounced and without any prior notice. The patient might not be prepared for it. The biggest problem after the in home care are the finances. Stroke can happen to anyone at any time. This can happen to someone who is the family's sole breadwinner or to someone retired but has to work to make ends meet. There are government and non-government programs to take care of the patients when they are fighting disease like stroke.

Social Security Administration Benefits has two programs that help patients get disability benefits. One is Social Security Disability Insurance or SSDI. Through this program the patient can receive benefits depending on two factors - their duration of work and the age that they had the Stroke. These factors will determine the eligibility and the amount of disability benefit they can receive. The process is lengthy and may take three to five months for the benefits to start. It is advised that the patient or the authorized care giver start the process as soon as possible. The patient is required to be disabled for five full months before they start receiving the disability checks. These benefits will continue until the patient recovers from the disease. After the patient receives SSDI for 24 months (2 years) the patient will then be eligible for Medicare.

The second program is Supplemental Security Income or SSI. This program makes monthly payments to people who have limited resources and income, are 65 or older, and are blind or disabled. The payments start as soon as the approval is given. Any recipient of SSI will also have Medicaid that will help to pay the hospital bills and fees from the healthcare providers. This varies from state to state. Some states provide additional funds for their residents.

To apply for the benefits, patients can go on [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call their local social security office to make an appointment to file the disability claim. Their toll free number is 800-772-1213.

There is another program under the Social Security administration called the Ticket to Work Program. The patients who are recipients of SSDI or SSI can get "tickets" to go to assistance programs that will help them get back into work force, free of cost.

The Patient Advocate Foundation helps patients navigate through the headache of some health care systems. It can be an ordeal or overwhelming especially when the patient and the family have ongoing needs. This foundation helps by facilitating patients and caregivers with information on the process and procedures that may or may not be required to complete. The foundation assists uninsured patients by negotiating with hospitals and insurance companies. As well as helping with the payment of co-pays if the patient is unable and they negotiate with banks to help patients with mortgage payments. The foundation is reachable through their toll free number 800-532-5274 or by visiting their website at [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org).

There are programs that can help with the costs of prescription medications, which can drain savings accounts. Programs exist throughout the government level as well as throughout the private sector. They can help with patient coverage for the high costs of prescription drugs. For all these programs, the patient or the concerned family member should apply as soon as possible to avoid any gap in care that can become a difficult hurdle to overcome. The hospitals' social workers or the Patient Advocate Foundation can be very helpful resources.

Other programs for patient care include the AARP Tax Aide. This is the foundation under the AARP group and is linked with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). They help with empowerment, security and protection of the disabled and low income seniors. Foundation of Health Coverage Education: This organization helps with the medical bills for the patients who do not have insurance at the time of hospitalization. They educate and help patients know their health insurance and which will help them with their preexisting situation, such as stroke. Visit them at <https://coverageforall.org>.

There are numerous organizations that are willing and ready to the help patients who are uninsured or even insured and don't have the means to either pay the bills or have other issues related to their health situation.

(This information was taken from the website of Stroke Association [www.StrokeAssociation.com](http://www.StrokeAssociation.com)).

**Social Security Administration Benefits has two programs that help patients get disability benefits.**

# Recipe Corner

## Spiced Grilled Chicken, Mashed Yams, and Black-Eyed Bean Salsa

**Serves 4**  
**Preparation: 30 minutes**  
(plus marinate time)  
**Cooking: 30 minutes**

### Ingredients

#### Chicken and Marinade

Chicken breasts (4, 12-14 oz) skinned | Cumin seeds (2 tsp)  
Ground coriander (2 tsp) | Fennel seeds (2 tsp) | Olive oil (2 tsp)

#### Bean Salsa

Black-eyed beans (7-8 oz can) | Olive oil (2 tsp) | Juice of 1/2 lemon  
Garlic clove (1, finely chopped) | Fresh cilantro (1 tbsp leaves,  
coarsely chopped) | Tomatoes (4 medium)

#### Mashed Yams and Veggies

Yam (21 oz, peeled & roughly chopped) | Olive oil (2 tsp)  
Black pepper (1/2 tsp) | Broccoli florets (400 g)  
Carrots (14 oz, cut into batons)



### Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mixed the spices together in a bowl with 1 tsp of olive oil. Cover chicken with the spice marinade for at least 30 minutes in the fridge. Can be stored in fridge overnight to increase flavor of chicken. (Chicken can be stored in a fridge at 40°F for a few days).

Peel the tomatoes by plunging in boiling water for about 30-40 seconds and then place directly into iced water (must be ice water, not just cold water) until fully cooled, drain and remove the skin (skin should easily peel off the tomatoes). Then dice the tomato. Place all the ingredients for the salsa in a bowl, mix thoroughly and set aside.

Cook the yams in boiling water until tender. Mash well, adding a little olive oil and season with black pepper and salt. Set side, keeping hot. In a hot frying pan, sear the marinated chicken on both sides and then cook in oven for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until fully cooked (poultry should reach a internal temp of 165°F). When cooked, allow to rest 10min or so and cut into diagonal strips. Steam the broccoli and carrots until fork tender. Place the mash on the center of the plate, arrange the chicken on top and serve with the vegetables and salsa on the side.

## May WNY Health Events

**25th Annual AIDS Walk:** May 6th at 9:00 AM at Delaware Park in Buffalo, NY. To register, please visit: <http://www.aidswalkbuffalo.org/>.

**Walk to Cure Arthritis:** May 13th at Halfmoon Town Park in Albany, NY. To register, please visit: <http://www.arthritis.org/get-involved/walk-to-cure-arthritis/>.

**Medicinal Garden Feature:** May 13th at 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Botanical Gardens in Buffalo, NY. For more information, please visit: <https://www.buffalogardens.com/>.

**4th Annual New York State Legislative Day:** May 15th from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, NY. To register, please visit: <https://www.kintera.org/AutoGen/Register>

**Effective Communication Strategies with the Alzheimer's Association:** May 16th at 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Buffalo Center. For more information, please visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/404538393256866/>.

**Kelly Tough 12K:** May 19th at 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM at New Era Field in Orchard Park, NY. To register, please visit <https://www.classy.org/orchard-park/events/kelly-tough-12k-buffalo/>

**Hospice Memorial Walk:** May 21st at 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM at Canalside in Buffalo, NY. To register, please visit: <http://www.hospicebuffalo.com/events/>.

**Health and Fitness Expo:** May 27th at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. To register, please visit <http://10times.com/health-fitness-buffalo>.

### Upcoming Events

**Buffalo Niagara Heart and Stroke Walk:** October 7th, starts at 8:00 AM at Coca Cola Field in Buffalo, NY. To register, please visit: [http://www2.heart.org/site/TR?fr\\_id=2323&pg=entry](http://www2.heart.org/site/TR?fr_id=2323&pg=entry)

# Stroke Support Groups

By Lauren Antkowiak, Staff Writer

Families and friends face uncertainty after someone they love suffers from a stroke. Most of those who suffer from a stroke are older and do not ever fully recover from it. The future is unknown for stroke patients, so sometimes you just need to be surrounded by people who have or are going through the same thing you are. Talking to someone who has gone through the same experience and seeing how they deal with life after a stroke can be inspiring for those who are just starting their journey. Expressing fear, sadness, and loneliness that come with having a stroke can aid the healing process for stroke survivors. A positive attitude and a sense of hopefulness can come out of a support system that may even improve a stroke victim's health. If you or someone you know has suffered from a stroke, reach out to one of these support groups to receive the help you need to get through this difficult time.

## Stroke Survivors Support Group

55 Melroy Ave, Lackawanna, NY 14218  
 OLV Senior Neighborhood Community Room (1st Floor)  
 Contact: Health Connection (716) 447-6205  
 Meet: 2nd Saturday of the month at 10:00am

## Family Support Group University at Buffalo

3435 Main St, Buffalo, NY 14214

82 Biomedical Education Building at University of Buffalo  
 Contact: Carol Ann Sellers (716) 829-5532  
 Meet: Every Thursday at 11:00am

\*Strictly for families and survivors.\*

## Reconnecting After Stroke and Brain Injury

445 Tremont Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120  
 Contact: Anne Sammarco (716) 690-2274

Meet: Second Tuesday of month at 4:30-6pm

\*Offers both guest speakers on various topics that the group demonstrates an interest, as well as an open forum where we encourage group discussion. More for survivors, but caregivers are welcome.\*

## Kenmore Mercy Hospital Stroke Survivor/Caregiver

2950 Elmwood Ave, Kenmore, NY 14217  
 Contact: Catherine Mulawka (716) 447-6213

Meet: 4th Tuesday of the month 2:00-4:00pm KMH Emergency Dept Conference Room

\*Informal group setting, on 1st floor; new topic every month, includes expert speakers.\*

## Hotline

## Stroke Family Warmline

Call 1-888-4-Stroke (1-888-478-7653)

Monday – Friday between 8:00am-5:00pm CT

\*Connects stroke survivors and their families with an ASA team member who can provide support, helpful information, or just a listening ear. We have trained several members of ASA's national call center to answer your questions about strokes.\*

## Newsletter

## Stroke Connection

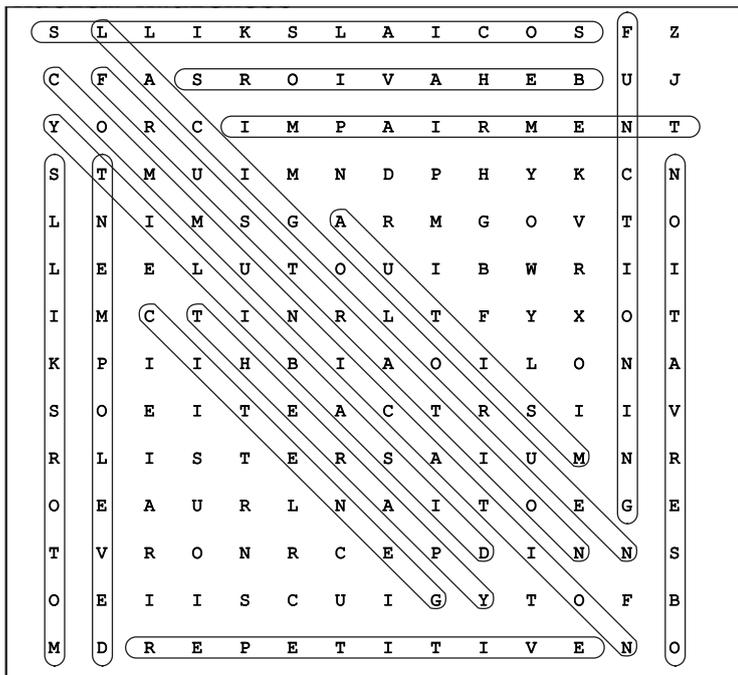
A free publication that offers support, information, and inspiration to stroke survivors and their families.

Offered as a digital publication, free app for smartphones and tablets, and on their official website:

<http://strokeconnection.strokeassociation.org/>

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## Autism Awareness Word Search Answers April 2017



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