



HOLY FAMILY
PARISH

PARISH NURSE MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2012

New Data on ‘Wake-up Strokes’ and Stroke Symptoms

Giving a stroke victim powerful drugs to dissolve clots soon after the attack can improve the chance of survival and reduces the possibility of long-term disability. But as many as one in seven strokes occur during sleep, making it harder to minimize damage, according to a recent study.

In the study, published in May 2011 in the journal *Neurology*, researchers examined the records of 1,778 people who had ischemic strokes, caused by blocked blood flow to the brain, who went to the emergency room in the Cincinnati area in 2005. Fourteen percent were “wake-up strokes,” where the person went to bed seemingly healthy and woke with symptoms like slurred speech, facial drooping, and body weakness on one side.

None of them were given intravenous clot-dissolving drugs, known as thrombolytics, when they reached the E.R. While the drugs can reduce mortality and disability from strokes, they should be given within three hours after symptoms appear. But since they can cause bleeding in the brain, doctors typically use them only when they can determine when symptoms began. Researchers concluded that it’s “unfortunate” that people with wake-up strokes aren’t considered for clot-busting therapy under current guidelines, given that some strokes probably occurred before awakening.

What to Do

Reduce your chance of a stroke by lowering blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, controlling diabetes, and taking low-dose aspirin, if needed. And eat healthful food, exercise, lose excess weight, and stop smoking. Have someone call 911 (or call yourself) if you suddenly notice facial drooping on one side, weakness in an arm, or slurred or strange speech.

Signs and Symptoms

Stroke is a medical condition that affects the blood vessels and arteries leading to and within the brain. It occurs when one or multiple blood vessels either become blocked or burst. As a result the affected portion of the brain stops receiving oxygen and nutrients required for normal functioning, and the surrounding tissue becomes damaged or starts to die. If left untreated, stroke can lead to permanent brain damage, paralysis, and death.

Common stroke symptoms: sudden physical numbness, weakness of the face, arm, or leg. Sometimes only on one side of the body will be severely affected. There may be sudden trouble comprehending or understanding others, extreme confusion, Speech, vision, balance, or physical coordination may also become out of sync, and may experience abrupt severe headache with no known reason.

If you or anyone around you is experiencing similar symptoms, seek emergency care right away. Call 911 for help, since stroke is a time-sensitive condition that may become life-threatening or disabling if not treated within a certain time frame.

A New Year Prayer for 2012

Come, Holy Spirit of the Risen Christ, be with us today and throughout the New Year of 2012.

May this be a New Year of spiritual growth. May God in His infinite wisdom make this a happy year! Not by shielding us from sorrows and pain, but by strengthening us to bear it as it comes. Please Lord, now and in the future year protect us, our families and friends. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

References for this article are from *Consumer Reports, On Health, August 2011* & www.strokesymptoms.com.

To contact Holy Family Parish Nurse Ministry call 330-688-6412 ext. 462 or view at www.holyfamilystow.org.