

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Stroke

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. It is estimated that about 800,000 people experience a stroke every year. Strokes can develop over many years from a variety of factors including your past medical history and family history. Major risk factors for a stroke include, but are not limited to the following: age, high blood pressure, previous stroke, high cholesterol, diabetes. Strokes can occur from a combination of these risk factors at any time. It is a medical emergency that results in the interruption of blood flow to the brain and its cells. The lack of oxygen to these cells can cause them to die within minutes. Cell destruction in the brain tissue can lead to lasting, life-long disabilities, and even death. It is important for everyone to be able to recognize a stroke and its symptoms.

Time is of the utmost importance for treating a stroke. A few key symptoms to recognize are numbness on one particular side of the body, confusion, poor vision, inability to walk, and a sudden onset headache. When deciding whether or not a person may be having a stroke, you should follow the acronym F.A.S.T. and perform this test:

F-Face- Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A-Arms- Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one not raise as much as the other?

S-Speech- Ask the person to recite a simple phrase. Does the person have trouble?

T-Time- If you observe any of these signs call 9-1-1 and record the time the symptoms began.

A stroke caused by a clot can only be treated one way and the patient must arrive within 3 hours of the onset of symptoms. Tissue plasminogen (tPA) is a thrombolytic (clot buster) that is the treatment of choice for treating an ischemic stroke. Patients that receive tPA have been shown to require less rehabilitation and less time in long term care facilities. Another alternative is an endovascular procedure. In this procedure, a trained physician will insert a wire caged device that can withdraw the clot blocking blood and oxygen flow. Since the majority of patients do not get to the emergency room within 3 hours, most patients will not receive tPA. That is why time is very important in the treatment of stroke.

Most strokes can be prevented. The main way to prevent a stroke is by living a healthy lifestyle. Some ways to accomplish that are by following a healthy diet, regularly exercising, not smoking, and limiting alcohol use. Excess alcohol consumption can raise blood pressure levels and triglycerides. These things can harden your arteries making you more susceptible to stroke. Most women are recommended not to exceed

more than one drink per day and men no more than two drinks per day. Everyone should be exercising at least 30 minutes a day for a minimum of 5 days per week. Visit your doctor to have your cholesterol and blood pressure checked regularly. If you are prescribed medication to manage any of these disease states, it is very important that you are taking them every day as prescribed by your doctor. Following these lifestyle goals can dramatically reduce your risk of having a stroke.

Resources:

www.stroke.org

www.cdc.gov/stroke

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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