

The Brain Buzz

A UAMS NEWSLETTER FOR STROKE SURVIVORS
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS



Need Some Support?

Each week, stroke survivor Molly Schwarz visits patients at UAMS on H8 that have had a stroke. If you are interested in having her visit with you to share her experience and provide support, please let your nurse know.



Molly Schwarz

Time is of the Essence

By Heather Moseby, BSN, RN

When a stroke hits, every minute counts. The longer the brain goes without sufficient blood flow, the greater the damage. The most common kind of stroke, ischemic stroke, is a stroke that blocks the blood vessels from carrying blood to the brain tissue. If caught in time, this type of stroke can be treated with a drug that will help break up the clot. The drug is called Tissue Plasminogen Activator or t-PA. It is given in a vein and works best if it is given as soon as possible after a stroke. With every passing minute, more brain cells die. The window of opportunity to start treating stroke patients is 3 hours. However, it is optimal if the person can be at the hospital within 60 minutes of onset of symptoms to begin their treatment. A CT scan must be performed prior to receiving t-PA to confirm the stroke is ischemic and rule out any other types of stroke, such as intracranial hemorrhage.



It is important to know the signs and symptoms:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

If you believe you are having a stroke – or someone you know is having a stroke – call 911 right away! Don't waste time – **“Time is Brain”!**

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Emotions After a Stroke

Right after a stroke, a survivor may respond one way, yet weeks later respond differently. Some survivors may react with understandable sadness; others may be amazingly cheerful. These emotional reactions may occur because of biological or psychological causes due to stroke. These changes may vary with time and can interfere with rehabilitation.



- Tell yourself that your feelings aren't "good" or "bad." Let yourself cope without feeling guilty about your emotions.
- Find people who understand what you're feeling. Ask about a support group.
- Get enough exercise and do enjoyable activities.
- Give yourself credit for the progress you've made. Celebrate the large and small gains.
- Learn to "talk" to yourself in a positive way.
- Allow yourself to make mistakes.
- Ask your doctor for help. Ask for a referral to a mental health specialist for psychological counseling or antidepressant medication if needed for depression.
- Make sure you get enough sleep at night. Sometimes lack of sleep can cause emotional changes.





*Source: American Stroke Association, 2012



Caregivers: Need Help After Your Loved One Has Had a Stroke?

The website provided by the American Stroke Association can help. This website provides many resources for caregivers to help you to manage the stressful time right after a stroke. Go to www.strokeassociation.org, click on "Life After Stroke" and then on "Family Caregivers." If you aren't able to access the internet, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE.

STROKE is an Emergency. Every minute counts. **ACT F.A.S.T!**

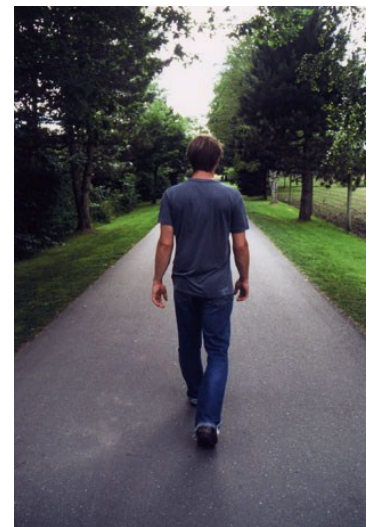
	F ACE	Does one side of the face droop? Ask the person to smile.
	A RMS	Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
	S PEECH	Is speech slurred? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the sentence repeated correctly?
	T IME	If the person shows any of these symptoms, Call 911 or get to the hospital immediately.

Refreshing the Caregiver

Source: American Stroke Association

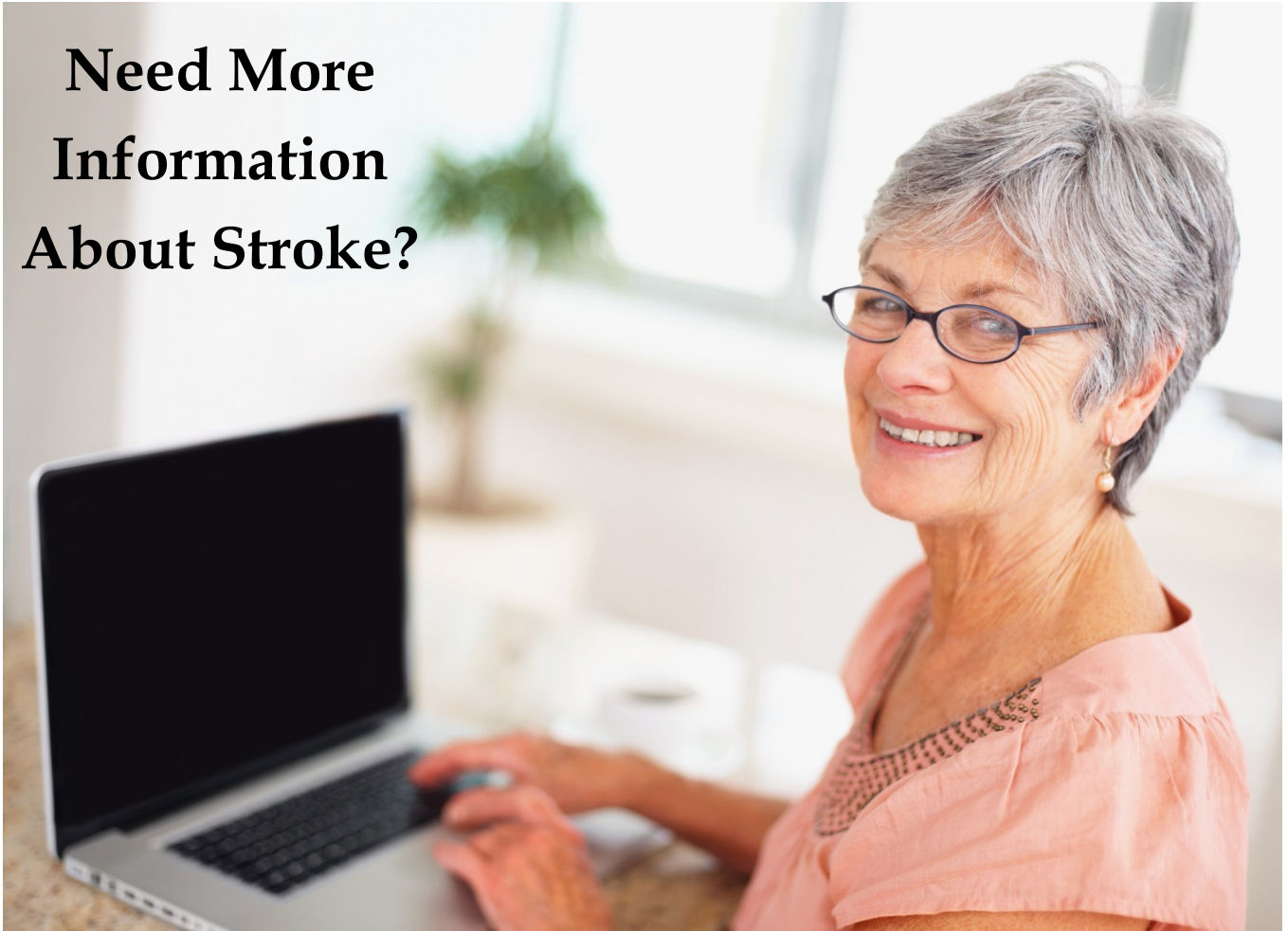
One of the most important things you can do for yourself and your loved one is to carve out time and space for yourself. This has to be a conscious action that you take every day. It could be as simple as spending 10 minutes playing a fun computer game. If you don't learn how to take a timeout, your frustration is going to boil over. You'll be less productive and your relationship with your loved one will suffer.

- Find a way to take a 10- or 15-minute walk a couple of times a day, even if it's just around the yard.
- Choose a space in the house that is your "quiet space" where you can go take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, read a book, pray, meditate, listen to music, sing, write in your journal, talk to a friend on the phone or just rest quietly for a few minutes.
- Schedule your timeouts. Choose a time when your loved one is typically sleeping, eating, watching a TV program or seems to be at their best during the day. They will get accustomed to your little timeouts after a while and stop resenting your privacy and interrupting you.



Insist on these moments in a gentle way and reward your loved one when you've refreshed yourself.

**Need More
Information
About Stroke?**



National Stroke Association

1-800-STROKES (787-6537)

www.stroke.org

American Stroke Association

1-888-4-STROKE (478-7653)

www.strokeassociation.org

UAMS Neurology Department

501-686-5838

<http://neurology.uams.edu/>