

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the sudden signs and symptoms of a stroke:

- Face Drooping
- Arm Weakness
- Speech Difficulty
- Time to call 911

Additional signs of a stroke may include:

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

According to Dr. Emil Matarese, director of a primary stroke center at St. Mary's Medical Center in Pennsylvania, if you have stroke symptoms, dial 911 immediately and go to an emergency room for evaluation. You should not wait to see if the symptoms go away.

While the vast majority of strokes are not preceded by TIA, about a third of people who experience TIA go on to have a stroke within a year. TIA is a warning stroke and gives a patient time to act and keep a permanent stroke from occurring. Although a TIA resolves itself before there is damage, there is no way to predict which clots will dissolve on their own. Stroke — and TIA — are medical emergencies; dial 911 and tell the operator you think it's a stroke and note the time the symptoms started. Remember: Time lost is brain lost.