The Top Five Signs of a Stroke

Stroke is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the U.S. Yet almost four out of five people don’t know all the top five signs of a stroke – nor do they know the first step to take to help a stroke victim.

Five Major Signs Missed
In a recent study, researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asked 61,000 people in 17 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands about stroke. Only 19.6 percent of those surveyed could correctly name all five telltale signs of stroke. The five major signs, which appear suddenly, are:

1. Confusion or trouble understanding or speaking
2. Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
3. Vision problems in one or both eyes
4. Dizziness, loss of coordination or difficulty walking
5. Severe headache with no known cause

Other symptoms include nausea or vomiting. Knowing these warning signs may be especially important if you or a loved one is at high risk for a stroke.

Heart Disease Increases Risk
“Just as it’s important to know the signs of stroke, it’s equally important to identify what increases a person’s risk,” says Alan Rubin, M.D., a board-certified neurologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “High blood pressure is the strongest risk factor for stroke. It’s important to work with your doctor to create a strategy to lower your risk for stroke.”

Other risk factors include:
• Previous stroke or ministrokes, called transient ischemic attacks, which cause temporary stroke symptoms
• Heart disease
• Previous heart attack
• Diabetes
• Cigarette smoking

Calling 911 Immediately Increases Survival
During a stroke, the blood supply is cut off to the brain. The longer the blood flow is stopped, the greater the damage. That’s why stroke is considered a medical emergency.

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR STROKE?
You can find out online with a stroke assessment at memorialhermann.org. Select “Health Risk Assessment” under the Health Information tab.

Dr. Rubin is a board-certified neurologist.
What Do the New Breast Cancer Guidelines Mean for You?

The recommendations suggested by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) have called breast cancer screening guidelines into question and have sparked debate and disagreement among breast health experts. What does it all mean for you?

What’s the Debate?
The American Cancer Society (ACS), the American College of Radiology (ACR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) strongly disagree with the suggested new guidelines. The ACS stands behind its recommendation that women who are at average risk for breast cancer should have yearly mammography beginning at age 40. The ACR considers the new guidelines a reversal of progress. A spokeswoman for the USPSTF said that the suggested guidelines are part of the task force’s standard rereview of all preventive health topics that occurs every five years, and they are the result of a careful analysis of benefits and risks. For instance, early detection and reduced breast cancer deaths were compared with false-positive results, which can cause anxiety and require more testing.

How Can You Make Sense of the News?
While the debate rages on among experts, here’s what you need to know about breast cancer screenings:

- **Mammography.** “It is the only screening modality proven to decrease mortality,” says Mary F. Ice, M.D., medical director at the Memorial City Bobetta Lindig Breast Center. “Mammography is an important tool for detecting breast cancer at an early stage when the treatment outcomes are most favorable for the patient.” But the benefits and limitations of mammography vary based on factors like age and breast density. These will be different in high-risk patients. Women should talk with their doctor about their personal risk factors before making a decision about when to start getting mammograms or how often they should get them.

- **Breast self-exams.** While the USPSTF does not recommend breast self-exams, the ACS says they are an option for women ages 20 and older as a means of familiarizing themselves with their breasts so that they can notice changes more easily. Talking with your doctor about the benefits and limitations can help you decide if you should start performing these self-exams.

- **Clinical breast exams.** The ACS recommends clinical breast exams at least every three years for all women in their 20s and 30s, and annually for women ages 40 and older. The USPSTF, however, believes there is not enough evidence to assess their value for women ages 40 and older. The new recommendations do not address clinical breast exams for women younger than age 40. “In our experience, breast examination, performed by the patient and their primary care physician, is an integral part in detecting breast cancer,” explains Dr. Ice. “Women should talk with their doctor about their personal risk factors and make a decision about whether they should have a clinical breast exam.”

WHEN WAS YOUR LAST MAMMOGRAM? To schedule your next mammogram at the Bobetta Lindig Breast Center, call 877.40.MAMMO (877.406.2666).

Dr. Ice is a board-certified radiologist.
Perhaps you’ve been trying to get pregnant for some time without success. Or maybe you are facing medical issues that could put your chance of having children at risk. Fertility issues can be extremely difficult. The key is to find a knowledgeable and compassionate fertility expert who can help. Thankfully, you don’t have to travel far. Such fertility services are available here in west Houston.

From Frozen Eggs to New Life
There are all kinds of fertility issues. Expert care can make the difference in successfully treating common problems and being able to provide breakthrough treatments and discoveries in the field. For example, physicians practicing at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center were responsible for the first birth from frozen eggs in the state of Texas. On May 28, 2010, a family in our community had healthy twins, born as a result of in vitro fertilization from previously frozen eggs.

“We are proud of this incredible accomplishment and believe it has immediate and important implications for many patients – especially recently diagnosed cancer patients,” says Timothy Hickman, M.D., a board-certified reproductive endocrinologist affiliated with Memorial City Medical Center and medical director at Houston IVF. “Patients may become sterile after chemotherapy or radiation. By freezing a woman’s eggs before treatment, she maintains the ability to have children in the future.”

Dr. Hickman explains that using frozen eggs may also benefit women who desire to have children later in life. As women age, the quality of their eggs deteriorates, greatly reducing the chance for a successful pregnancy.

Cutting-Edge Screening
Another service offered is comprehensive chromosomal screening (CCS). This rare screening involves taking a biopsy of embryos before selecting which ones to transfer during the in vitro fertilization process. Once biopsied, all 23 pairs of chromosomes are examined to detect any abnormalities.

“Some embryos have abnormalities that are incompatible with life and cause spontaneous miscarriage,” explains Dr. Hickman. “CCS allows us to choose the ones that are most likely to result in normal pregnancies, reducing the chance for multiple miscarriages.”

In the future, the screening may also detect specific genes linked to inherited conditions, such as cystic fibrosis or muscular dystrophy.

“We have statistically higher rates of successful pregnancies, and patients come to us from every continent except Antarctica for our cutting-edge fertility services,” says Dr. Hickman. “Thankfully, area patients don’t have to travel around the world for the same care and treatments.”
Obese Children Prone to Specific Types of Injuries

In a recent study in *Pediatrics*, researchers compared the injuries of more than 23,000 children ages 3 to 14 who were brought to the emergency room. They found that kids who were obese (higher than the 95th percentile for weight compared with kids the same age and gender) were almost twice as likely as lower-weight children to have leg, foot and ankle injuries.

**Extra Weight Stresses the Lower Body**
The researchers note that the heavier the person, the greater the force put on the lower body just by walking or running. This increases the risk for injury. What’s more, being obese has been shown to prolong recovery from an injury and make complications more likely.

“When we look at pediatric trauma patients, obese children are more likely to have extremity injuries, more likely to require orthopedic surgical intervention and more susceptible to complications such as deep vein thrombosis,” says Shiraz Younas, M.D., a fellowship-trained pediatric orthopedic surgeon affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “In my practice, we see more and more overweight children presenting at early ages with low back pain, ankle sprains and knee pain. Counseling parents regarding lifestyle changes is a key part of treating these patients.”

**Fewer Head Injuries May Signal Lower Sport Participation**
The study also showed that nonobese children were much more likely to injure their faces and heads. It’s not known why obese kids have fewer head injuries than their slimmer peers. Researchers speculate it’s because heavier kids are less likely to participate in activities that put them at risk for these types of injuries.

All kids should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. For children who are overweight, encourage them to start slowly and gradually build up their activity time. And always ensure your child wears proper gear, such as supportive shoes.

**LOOKING FOR A PEDIATRIC SPECIALIST NEAR YOU?** We offer pediatric specialty care, including cardiology, gastroenterology, orthopedics and more. Call 713.222.CARE (2273) for a referral to a pediatric specialist.

Dr. Younas is a fellowship-trained pediatric orthopedic surgeon.
Coronary bypass surgery and angioplasty are the two most common procedures used to treat restricted blood flow to the heart caused by coronary vascular disease. But despite initial procedure success, a cleared artery can become reblocked by means of graft failure with bypass surgery or restenosis after angioplasty. PTCA, or percutaneous coronary angioplasty, has exceeded bypass surgery over the last decade as the predominant means of dealing with coronary blockage.

How Does Reblocking Occur?
During an angioplasty procedure, a stent, or wire mesh tube, is placed in the cleared arteries to keep them open. In some cases, thick scar tissue may form around the stent, reblocking the artery. This is known as restenosis.

Recent medical advancements in drug delivery by means of drug-eluting stents has significantly reduced the problem of restenosis. This important technology is available at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center.

New Stents Prevent Scarring
“New drug-coated stents may be key in preventing scar tissue from causing restenosis,” says Michael Mitschke, M.D., a board-certified interventional cardiologist affiliated with Memorial City Medical Center. “These drug-coated stents have been able to prevent restenosis, and thus reintervention, in the majority of cases where they are applied. A study published in The American Journal of Medicine found no evidence of restenosis six months after a heart procedure in patients given stents coated with the drug sirolimus. Since then, other unique antiproliferative drugs have been found to be beneficial when incorporated into stents. The drugs are slowly released from the stent at the site of angioplasty.”

Quality Heart Care Near You
The Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute-Memorial City Medical Center is one of the nation’s most advanced heart facilities. You can take a virtual tour of our Heart & Vascular Institute online. Visit our website at memorialhermann.org/memorialcity and select “Heart & Vascular Institute Virtual Tour” under the Learn More tab.
Lupus: Little Symptoms Can Signal Disease

Lupus, or systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), is called the “great imitator.” It can mimic the flu, a rash, arthritis, depression and many other ailments.

“Lupus is actually an autoimmune disease,” says Alexandra Gonzalez Fuentes, M.D., a board-certified rheumatologist affiliated with Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. “This means it’s a disorder that causes the immune system – which normally attacks germs – to harm healthy tissues and organs in the body. For example, lupus can affect the skin, blood vessels, heart, joints, lungs and kidneys.”

Lupus typically strikes women between ages 15 and 44. Its true cause is unknown. But many factors may trigger lupus, including genes and hormones.

Symptoms Vary Greatly
Each person’s experience with lupus is different. Some people may have just a few symptoms, while others have more. Symptoms might be mild or severe. They also can flare up, then disappear. The most common ones include:
- Painful or swollen joints
- Frequent, unexplained fevers
- Extreme fatigue
- Skin rashes, especially a butterfly-shaped one across the nose and cheeks
- Sensitivity to sunlight
- Achy muscles

Seek Help to Live Successfully
Laboratory tests can determine whether you have lupus. Although a cure for lupus is not available presently, proper treatment is key to helping you enjoy an active, normal life. You also can protect your health by following these tips:
- Get enough rest and pace yourself to conserve energy.
- Avoid symptom triggers, including bright sunlight.
- Try stress busters, such as yoga.
- Get regular exercise and eat a well-balanced diet to reduce heart risks.
- Report any signs of symptom flare-ups or medication side effects to your doctor.
- Ask about a yearly flu shot to protect yourself from infections.
- Talk with your doctor if you plan on having children. Lupus can put pregnancy at a greater risk for miscarriage and premature birth.

CONCERNED YOU MAY HAVE LUPUS?
Talk with your doctor about your symptoms. For a physician referral, call 713.222.CARE (2273) or visit memorialhermann.org.

Dr. Gonzalez Fuentes is board-certified in internal medicine and rheumatology.
**EVENTS AND SCREENINGS**

**Girls’ Night Out: Gotta Go?**
Nov. 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Do you suffer from gastrointestinal or urological problems? Learn more about the causes and treatments of various urological and digestive diseases at this fun-filled event. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center. Registration is required.

**FREE NewStart Weight-Loss Surgery Seminars**
Nov. 10, 16 and 17; Dec. 8, 14 and 22
For people morbidly obese with a body mass index of 30 or higher who are interested in learning about metabolic and weight-loss surgery. To register, call 713.242.4600.

**OB/Maternity Facility Tours**
Tours of the facility are held regularly. Registration is required.

**CLASSES AND SEMINARS**

**Breastfeeding Class**
Teaches prospective parents the fundamentals of infant care. Cost: $30 per couple.

**CPR for Infants**
Teaches basic techniques used in the event of foreign-body airway obstruction (choking) in infants. Cost: $15 per person, $30 per couple.

**Newborn Care Class**
Teaches prospective parents the fundamentals of infant care. Cost: $30 per couple.

**Prepared Childbirth Class**
Prepares expectant parents for their childbirth experience. OB tour is included. Cost: $70 per couple.

**SUPPORT GROUPS**

**Alzheimer’s**
Meets the third Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. For more information, call 713.934.8844. Location: West Pavilion, Second Floor, Classroom A.

**Better Breathers**
Meets the third Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. Call 713.242.3555 or 3190 to learn more.

**Breast Cancer**
Meets the third Tuesday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. For more details, call 713.242.3395. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

**Cancer**
Meets every Monday, 7 to 8 p.m. To learn more, call 713.242.3564. Location: Medical Plaza 2, First Floor, Suite 152.

**Diabetes**
Meets the second Thursday of the month, eight times per year, 7 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 713.242.3890. Location: West Pavilion, Frostwood Boardroom.

**Mended Hearts**
Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. To learn more, call 713.242.3440. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

**Stroke**
Meets the second and fourth Thursdays of every month, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Call 713.242.2906. Location: East Tower, Fourth Floor, Neuroscience Conference Room.

**Weight-Loss Surgery**
Meets the first Wednesday of every month, 7 to 9 p.m. Call 713.242.4600. Location: West Pavilion, Main Conference Center.

For more information on any of the below events, or to register, call 713.222.CARE (2273), unless otherwise noted.
Dr. Alan Rubin is a board-certified neurologist. He attended medical school at the University of Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico, and completed his residency and fellowship at Albany Medical Center Hospital in Albany, N.Y. Dr. Rubin is the founding medical director of the Memorial Hermann Memorial City stroke unit.

Dr. Mary Ice is a board-certified radiologist. She attended medical school at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She completed her residency at The University of Texas Medical School in Houston. She completed a breast-imaging fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Dr. Timothy Hickman is a board-certified reproductive endocrinologist. He attended medical school at Saint Louis University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Mo. He completed his residency at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Md.

Dr. Shiraz Younas is an assistant professor in the department of Pediatric Surgery at UT Health Medical School. He attended medical school at Aga Khan Medical College in Pakistan and completed his orthopedics residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He received his fellowship in pediatric orthopedics at the Campbell Clinic in Memphis, Tenn.

Dr. Michael Mitschke is a board-certified interventional cardiologist. He received his medical degree from The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, where he also performed his residency. He completed his interventional cardiology training at the Texas Heart Institute at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Alexandra Gonzalez Fuentes is board certified in internal medicine and rheumatology. She attended medical school at the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara. She completed her residency at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, N.Y., and a rheumatology fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Dr. Timothy Hickman is a board-certified reproductive endocrinologist. He attended medical school at Saint Louis University School of Medicine in Saint Louis, Mo. He completed his residency at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Md.

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**FIND A DOCTOR NEAR YOU.**
For a physician directory, call 713.222.CARE (2273).

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