



SENIORCARE OPTIONS

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**Candor. Compassion.
Competence.**

Aging Life Care Management
for the Metro Atlanta Area
Assisting medically frail seniors,
disabled adults, & their caregivers



Stroke: What is it? Who does it affect? And, what can we do to act FAST?

A Stroke, also known as a CVA (Cerebral Vascular Accident) is an often preventable condition that can happen to anyone at any time – but has increased risk varying with ethnicity and age. It is a “brain attack” that suddenly occurs when poor blood flow to the brain results in the death of brain cells.

This cell death in the brain caused by stroke can lead to a variety of disabilities and even death. There are currently nearly 7 million stroke survivors in the United States – and it remains the leading cause of long-term disability. This condition costs the United States an estimated \$34 billion per year in provided healthcare and lost wages. In this country, stroke remains responsible for 1 death every 4 minutes.

The country’s highest rates of Stroke-related deaths occur in the Southeastern United States – also, known as the “Stroke Belt”.

There are 2 types of stroke: Hemorrhagic and Ischemic. Hemorrhagic strokes occur when a blood vessel in the brain leaks blood or ruptures – causing increased pressure from the blood to damage or kill brain cells. This type of stroke is seen less often but can have a high rate in death. Ischemic strokes occur when a vessel carrying blood is blocked by a clot – causing blood not to reach the brain and brain cell damage or death.

Transient Ischemic Attacks (or TIAs – also called “mini-strokes”) do not generally cause permanent brain damage – but they are a serious warning sign that a future stroke may happen (almost in 40% of cases) and changes need to be made to reduce risks.

Stroke risks increase with the presence of head injury, bleeding disorders, high blood pressure, Afib, high cholesterol, heart disease, tobacco use, alcohol use, low levels of physical activity, poor diet, obesity, and diabetes.

With stroke, time is of the essence – as many treatments help best if administered quickly! Call 911 immediately! Note the time of the first symptom – as this can help to determine treatment options. Treatment for stroke will often begin in the ambulance. Once at the hospital, brain scans will show the type of stroke, medications are administered, and potential surgeries performed. The immediate goal is treatment – then this is quickly followed with prevention of another stroke and rehabilitation.

There are many great advances in stroke treatment and care that are reducing long-term disabilities and saving lives – thus, it will be important to know and reduce your own risks, be are of your local Primary and Comprehensive Stroke Centers (for ideal care), and if symptoms surface to SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY!

Warning signs of stroke include (Remember acronym FAST) :

F – Face: Does one side of the face droop, hang downward, or a sudden weakness to the face? Is there trouble seeing out of both eyes? Is there a sudden, severe headache with no known cause?

A – Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? Is there a sudden weakness to either arm or leg (especially on one side of the body)? Is there sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance?

S – Speech: Does speech sound slurred or strange? Is there sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or trouble understanding?

T – Time: If warning signs observed, call 911 immediately!

Resources Available

American Stroke Association -
<http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/>

What are the warning signs of stroke? -
http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/documents/downloadable/ucm_300317.pdf

CDC Preventing Stroke: Healthy Living -
http://www.cdc.gov/stroke/healthy_living.htm

Support Group Information

Lacy Doremus, LMSW, C-ASWCM, facilitates a monthly caregiver support group at 7pm at Presbyterian Village - conference room between Hearthstone and Wellness center. The address is 2000 E West Connector Austell, GA and meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

About SeniorCare Options

SeniorCare Options provides Certified Aging Life Care Management throughout the Metro-Atlanta area. Our team consists of Master’s level clinicians in the fields of counseling, social work, therapeutic recreation, and registered nursing. Our backgrounds are vast and specific to the current clinical needs of our clients and their families who may be in transition, have chronic or difficult-to-manage conditions, and who require increased guidance. Our interdisciplinary focus, extensive experience, and heightened sensitivity to their specific needs prove to be an invaluable asset to families faced with the maze of options and care needs. **For more information** regarding Aging Life Care Management services, our support groups, or to inquire about requesting services for someone under your care, **please contact us at: 770-579-9177 or brandih@seniorcareopt.com.**