

Is It a Stroke?

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- *Ask the individual to smile.
- *Ask him or her to raise both arms.
- *Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions.

They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last Feb.

Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage. The American Stroke Association's website is www.strokeassociation.org

May is American Stroke Month - a perfect time to help raise awareness of the warning signs and risk factors of stroke! The American Heart/Stroke Association has free resources to help you!

The attached link will take you to the 2004 American Stroke Month Community Education page on the Stroke Assoc. public website - there are quite a few documents that can be downloaded and copied for free. Please take a moment to review this great toolkit that you can utilize with co-workers, patients and the community.