



AMBULANCE FACT SHEET

ISSUED JULY 2009

Stroke - recognising the early warning signs



Ambulance is urging the community not to ignore the symptoms of stroke or down play their significance.

For all medical emergencies dial Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance

Stroke is Australia's second single greatest killer and leading cause of disability. Recognising the signs of stroke and calling 000 for an Ambulance immediately can be the difference between death and severe disability and making a good recovery.

A simple mnemonic to assist in recognising a stroke involves utilising the FAST acronym:

- > **F**ace – can the person smile, does their mouth droop?
- > **A**rms – can the person raise both arms?
- > **S**peech – can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- > **T**ime – act **FAST** and call Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance.

A stroke may occur with any one, or a combination of the following:

- > Weakness or numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.
- > Difficulty speaking or understanding.
- > Dizziness, loss of balance or unexplained falls.
- > Loss of vision, sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes.
- > Headache, usually severe and of abrupt onset or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.
- > Difficulty swallowing.

If you experience any of these symptoms yourself or recognise them in someone else, dial Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance, even if the symptoms last for only a short time. There is clear evidence that early treatment greatly reduces the death rate and longer-term effects for survivors.

For more information you can visit the National Stroke Foundation website at:
www.strokefoundation.com.au or
tel: 1800 787 653

For further information please contact: