Let’s talk about stroke. Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the US. Approximately 800,000 people have a stroke each year. Stoke is more common in women (60%) than men (40%).

What causes stoke to occur? Strokes occur due to a problem with the blood supply to the brain; either a vessel is blocked (ischemic stroke) or a blood vessel ruptures (hemorrhagic stroke). This is a medical emergency and treatment must be sought as soon as possible. Early recognition and intervention lead to better outcomes.

Ischemic strokes are the most common, accounts for 85 % of all stokes. Blockages are frequently caused by blood clots which can be formed by fatty deposits in the vessels. Hemorrhagic strokes are caused by ruptures which can be caused by conditions like hypertension, trauma, blood thinning medications, and/or aneurysms.

How can I tell if someone is having a stroke? The acronym F A S T is the best way to remember the signs of a stroke. F=Face drooping, does one side droop when someone tries to smile? A= Arm weakness if someone tries to raise both arms does one arm drift downward? S= Speech difficulty if trying to repeat a simple phrase is their speech slurred or strange? T= Time to call 9 1 1 if **any** of these are observed. It is important to know that the clock starts running with the first symptom. Ideally a person should be treated within 3 hours of the onset of symptoms. The sooner the treatment, generally there will be better prognosis and are less likely to experience lasting damage or death.

So how to prevent or reduce the risk of stroke…… **Healthy living** that is healthy eating less fat, if diabetic good control of your blood sugar; maintain a healthy weight; be active: do not smoke: limit alcohol use; and if you have any medical conditions do not forget to take your medication and follow your doctor’s orders.

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2Timothy1:7*

Resources: CDC and Medical News Today