

## **MAY IS NATIONAL STROKE PREVENTION MONTH**

**Stroke is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death and the #1 cause of adult disability in America. In fact, about 750,000 people will have a stroke each year. A stroke is a 'brain attack', and cuts off blood and oxygen flow to the brain cells that control everything we do. Strokes can be caused when a blood clot blocks an artery in the brain (ischemic stroke) or when an artery bursts due to a weak spot on a blood vessel wall (hemorrhagic stroke).**

### **Stroke Prevention**

Did you know that up to 80% of strokes can be prevented? While some risk factors are out of your control – such as being over age 55, being male, being African-American, having diabetes or having a family history of stroke, other lifestyle risk factors can be controlled by you. These controllable risk factors include: maintaining a normal blood pressure, finding out if you have atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat), not smoking, drinking only in moderation, keeping your cholesterol levels at normal levels, having a regular exercise routine, and eating a low fat diet, including plenty of fruits and vegetables.

### **Common Stroke Symptoms**

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

### **Think F.A.S.T. – Recognize Stroke Symptoms**

- F** = Face      Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?  
**A** = Arms     Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?  
**S** = Speech    Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?  
**T** = Time      If you observe any of these signs, then it's time to call 9-1-1.

**Call 911 if you have or see any of these symptoms. Stroke is an emergency and treatment is more effective the earlier it is given.**

**This information provided courtesy of your Employee Assistance Program.  
For confidential assistance, contact us at 716-681-4300.**

