

## WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 5/24/10 – **F-A-S-T** ACTIONS for a STROKE

May is National Stroke Awareness Month. A stroke is a medical emergency – the third leading cause of death in the US. It can happen any time or anywhere, and what we might not realize is that a stroke can happen to you at any age. While there are many types of stroke, all have an impact on the brain.

When someone suffers a stroke, time lost in getting care results in brain function loss. It is crucial that you learn to recognize the symptoms of a stroke and know to get help immediately. Here is an acronym to help you remember the main symptoms of a stroke:

**F** – Face: the patient may feel numbness, weakness or experience drooping of facial muscles and there may be a visible difference, often on one side, so their face looks asymmetrical. The eyes may be affected, and vision may blur. Because the area most affected is the brain, they may experience a severe headache.

**A** – Arms and legs: the patient may also feel numbness or weakness in their arms and legs. They may not be able to raise both arms, or shake your hand. They may have trouble walking, feel dizzy, or have a loss of balance. Again, these symptoms may be observed on just one side of the body.

**S** – Speech: the patient may not be able to describe what is happening as their speech may be slurred or “thick”. Or when you ask them a question, they may be confused.

**T** – Time: These symptoms generally happen quickly and a FAST response will be important. Call for professional medical assistance. If at home, call 9-1-1. If your work place has a different system for contacting emergency medical care, use the system that is in place. Remember – Time lost is Brain Lost.

The American Stroke Association has a short video on their website showing the signs and symptoms of a stroke. You can view it at <http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200037>.

Remember that this safety tip is available on our website as a free, downloadable pdf. Find it here - [scm-safety.com/news](http://scm-safety.com/news).