

## Health Link

### Know the Warning Signs of Stroke and Act Immediately

While eating his breakfast at the kitchen table with his wife, George began experiencing blurred vision and confusion.

George sloughed off the symptoms as a dizzy spell, and tells his wife that he is going to go and lie down for a while. She agrees to the plan only to find George a few hours later confused and slurring his speech.

George's delay and his wife's lack of awareness of the signs and symptoms of a stroke cost him valuable recovery time – time that he can't take back.

Immediately recognizing and responding to the warning signs of stroke can significantly improve survival and recovery, explains Charlene Quan, District Stroke Nurse at Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare.

"The first three-and-a-half hours are critical," she says. "Timing is everything when it comes to treating stroke patients. There is a limited window from the onset of a stroke to administer the drug that could drastically reduce and in some cases reverse the effects of a stroke."

Stroke and the effects of stroke are treatable, especially if you recognize the warning signs and respond immediately by calling 9-1-1.

She says the earlier the drug is given the more likely it is that a patient will have a good outcome. Public education about the signs and symptoms of a stroke and the need to respond quickly are keys to success.

"There is a tendency for some people to shrug off the symptoms of a stroke, like George did so it's important to know these symptoms and pay attention to them," she said.

If you believe you are suffering a stroke, call 9-1-1 and emergency responders will bring you to the District Stroke Centre at Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare's Huntsville District Memorial Hospital site.

The District Stroke Centre at MAHC is part of the Central East Stroke Network, one of 11 regional areas across the province who are implementing the vision of the Ontario Stroke System, Fewer Strokes, Better Outcomes.

### **June is Stroke Awareness Month! Do you know the signs of stroke?**

The five warning signs of a stroke include:

- Sudden loss of strength (weakness) or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg
- Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding (confusion)
- Sudden trouble with your vision
- Sudden severe and unusual headache
- Sudden loss of balance (dizziness)

*Health Link is an awareness column brought to you on behalf of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare.*