

## Would you know if you were having a stroke?

If you felt the side of your face go numb or were unable to move your arm - what would you do?

According to the National Stroke Foundation, you could be experiencing the signs of stroke, and they say too many people who experience them are waiting to see if the symptoms disappear instead of calling an ambulance straight away.

Facial weakness and arm weakness, along with speech difficulties are the most common signs of stroke and yet the least recognised.

The National Stroke Foundation says that it is vital anyone experiencing the signs of stroke or seeing them in someone else should call 000 immediately.

Stroke Foundation CEO, Dr Erin Lalor, says that getting medical treatment immediately can make a huge difference to someone's recovery.

"We say that time lost is brain lost. Getting immediate treatment can be the difference between death or severe disability and making a good recovery after a stroke."

"There is a simple test for stroke that everybody should know it's called the FAST test," she said.

**FAST** stands for **F**acial weakness, **A**rm weakness, **S**peech difficulty, **T**ime to act. Using the **FAST** test involves asking three simple questions:

- **F**ace – Can the person smile, has their mouth or eyes drooped?
- **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 000 immediately.

Stroke is the second single biggest killer in Australia – with one occurring every 10 minutes.

The signs of stroke may occur alone or together and include:

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

The Stroke Foundation says that it's important to get medical attention even if the signs only last for a short period.