

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMERICAN STROKE ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON SENATOR MARK KIRK & ISCHEMIC STROKE

On behalf of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, we send our thoughts and well wishes to U.S. Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) and his family after Sen. Kirk recently suffered an ischemic stroke.

Ischemic strokes account for about 87 percent of all stroke cases. They occur as a result of an obstruction within a blood vessel supplying blood to the brain. The underlying condition for this type of obstruction is the development of fatty deposits lining the vessel walls, a condition called atherosclerosis.

These fatty deposits can cause two types of obstruction: *cerebral thrombosis*, which refers to a thrombus (blood clot) that develops at the clogged part of the vessel; or *cerebral embolism*, which refers generally to a blood clot that forms at another location in the circulatory system, usually the heart and large arteries of the upper chest and neck. A portion of the blood clot breaks loose, enters the bloodstream and travels through the brain's blood vessels until it reaches vessels too small to let it pass. A second important cause of embolism is an irregular heartbeat, known as atrial fibrillation. It creates conditions where clots can form in the heart, dislodge and travel to the brain.

STROKE WARNING SIGNS:



Sudden numbness or weakness of the 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

If you or someone around you experiences one or more of these symptoms, immediately call 9-1-1. Time lost is brain lost.

By following these three simple steps, you can help protect yourself against stroke.

Reduce your chances of having a stroke by learning the risk factors and working with your doctor to help reduce your risk.

Recognize the warning signs of a stroke. Stroke is a medical emergency. Every second counts!

Respond by calling 9-1-1 immediately if you or someone close to you is having warning signs of stroke. Then check the time. When did the first symptom start? You'll be asked this important question later.

STROKE STATISTICS

About 795,000 Americans each year suffer a new or recurrent stroke. That means, on average, a stroke occurs every 40 seconds. Approximately 610,000 of these are first attacks, and 185,000 are recurrent attacks (GCNKSS, NINDS, and NHLBI; GCNKSS and NINDS data for 1999 provided July 9, 2008; estimates compiled by NHLBI). An estimated 7,000,000 Americans 20 years of age or older have had a stroke (extrapolated to 2008 using NCHS/NHANES 2005 to 2008 data).

Stroke kills more than 137,000 people a year. Stroke accounts for about 1 of every 18 deaths, making stroke the No. 4 cause of death in this country. On average, every 4 minutes someone dies of stroke.

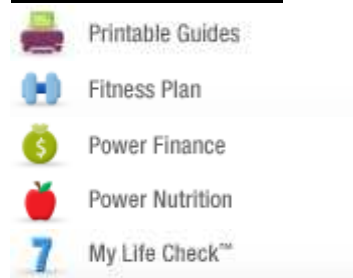
STROKE TOOLS AND TIPS

STROKE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL: <http://powertoendstroke.org/tools-risk.html>

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEETS: **Let's Talk About Stroke** is a series of downloadable patient information sheets, created by the American Stroke Association, that presents information in a question-and-answer format that's brief, easy to follow and easy to read. They also provide room for you to write down questions to ask your doctor. This can help you prepare to get the most out of your next visit with your healthcare professional.

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/AboutStroke/Patient-Information-Sheets UCM_310731_Article.jsp](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/AboutStroke/Patient-Information-Sheets_UCM_310731_Article.jsp)

MORE ONLINE TOOLS:



STROKE CENTERS:



[Find your nearest stroke certified hospital](#)

STROKE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

POWER TO END STROKE www.powertoendstroke.org: an education and awareness campaign that embraces and celebrates the culture, energy, creativity and lifestyles of Americans. It unites people to help make an impact on the high incidence of stroke within their communities. It was created in 2006 by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association to help reach the ASA mission to reduce stroke and risk of stroke by 25% by 2010. It was also meant to raise critical awareness within the African American population. Heart disease and stroke are major health risks for all people, but African Americans are at particularly high risk.

[HeartHub™ For Patients and Caregivers](#): Find tools to take control and manage your heart and stroke health.

[American Stroke Association](#) Find tools to take control and manage your heart and stroke health.

About the American Stroke Association

The American Stroke Association is dedicated to prevention, diagnosis and treatment to save lives from stroke — America's No. 3 killer and a leading cause of serious disability. We fund scientific research, help people better understand and avoid stroke, encourage government support, guide healthcare professionals and provide information to enhance the quality of life for stroke survivors. We were created in 1997 as a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more, call 1-888-4STROKE or visit strokeassociation.org.

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