Every 60 seconds, someone in the United States suffers a stroke. It’s crucial that people recognize the signs of stroke. Every single minute counts—seeking medical attention immediately can literally mean the difference between life and death or permanent disability,” states Dr. Alison Baird, Medical Director, SUNY Downstate Stroke Center.

What Is a Stroke?
A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot (ischemic stroke) or bursts (hemorrhagic stroke). Without the oxygen carried by the blood, brain cells begin to die immediately.

Prior to a major stroke, people sometimes experience a transient ischemic attack (TIA) in which a clot obstructs an artery for a short time and creates stroke-like symptoms. Since these “temporary” or “mini-strokes” last only minutes or hours, people often ignore them. Do not dismiss such an episode! Prompt medical treatment after a TIA can often prevent a fatal or disabling stroke.

More than 750,000 people experience a stroke each year. Stroke is the third-leading cause of death in the United States and the leading cause of adult disability.

What Are the Signs of Stroke?
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance
- Sudden confusion, or difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- Weakness, numbness or tingling on one side of the face or body
- Dim or blurry vision in one or both eyes
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you notice even one of these symptoms, even if it goes away, do not wait. Call 911 immediately.

What are the Risk Factors?
Men have a slightly higher risk of stroke, but women have a greater chance of dying from one. African Americans have the greatest risk, as their chances are double those of whites. Also, mini-strokes, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and smoking greatly increase your risk.

What’s So Special About Us?
SUNY Downstate Stroke Center is one of the most advanced centers in the United States for the diagnosis, management, prevention and research of stroke and cerebrovascular disorders.

We have been designated a Primary Stroke Center by the New York State Department of Health in recognition of our having met the highest standards for the treatment of stroke patients, including speed of treatment and cutting-edge treatment advances. From the time a patient arrives in an ambulance, the stroke team is able to evaluate and treat him or her within minutes.

Prompt treatment at a Primary Stroke Center offers your best chance for preventing death and recovering from a stroke. In addition to standard tPA therapy, we use new catheter-based techniques to directly break up and dissolve clots within the brain as long as eight hours after a stroke starts.
Prompt Diagnosis
The rapid, coordinated efforts of the EMTs and emergency room physicians and staff quickly identify stroke patients and fast-track them to appropriate medical and surgical interventions. Nearly 50% of patients treated for stroke within the first 3 hours experience little and sometimes no physical or speech deficit.

Advanced Imaging
Advanced multi-modal diagnostic imaging, such as CT (computed tomography), CTA (CT angiography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and MRA (MR angiography), quickly tells us the type of stroke, which vessel is blocked, the extent of damage, and location of viable tissue. Other sophisticated brain imaging studies include angiography, TCD (transcranial Doppler), EEG (electroencephalography), TEE (transesophageal echocardiography) and carotid duplex.

Multidisciplinary Stroke Team
The SUNY Downstate Stroke Center focuses on quality patient care using a multi-disciplinary approach. Our healthcare professionals who are highly trained and devoted to the expert care of patients with stroke include neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuroradiologists, neurointerventionists, cardiologists, neurocritical care specialists, neurorehabilitation specialists, physical medicine and rehabilitation professionals, social workers, nurses, therapists, technicians, and other healthcare professionals who are highly trained and devoted to the expert care of patients with stroke.

Interventional Stroke Therapy
Catheters (thin, hollow tubes) are inserted through the groin and guided via advanced imaging to treat problems endovascularly (from inside the blood vessel). Advantages include local or regional anesthesia instead of general anesthesia, a shorter recovery time, less pain, smaller incisions and less stress on the heart.

- Intra-arterial Thrombolysis

In this procedure, a small catheter is inserted into the blood vessels of the brain during cerebral angiography to deliver clot-dissolving medications directly to the blocked blood vessel.

- Neuroradiology

Our interventional specialists use the latest tools and technologies for the treatment of aneurysms, arterial venous malformations (AVMs), acute stroke, carotid stenosis and other vascular disorders of the brain.

Rehabilitation
Physical and mental deficits from stroke range from mild to severe. The most common results of a stroke are hemiparesis (paralysis on one side of the body), aphasia (inability to speak or understand language), learning difficulties, memory loss, behavioral/emotional changes and loss of motor skills. Physiatrists and therapists specialize in helping stroke patients return to the highest possible level of day-to-day functionality and independence. Rehabilitation is comprehensive, ranging from intense therapy in the hospital to outpatient rehabilitation.

Community Outreach
One of our primary goals is to stop strokes before they occur. Our community outreach program provides stroke prevention education and screening opportunities. Our support group, the Brooklyn Downstate Stroke Club, meets once a month to provide continuing education, comfort, counsel and encouragement to stroke patients and their loved ones.

www.downstate.edu/strokecenter
Please visit our website for additional information about our physicians, staff, facility and services.

Physicians You Can Trust

- Alison E. Baird, MD, PhD, FRACP
  Medical Director, SUNY Downstate Stroke Center
  Professor of Neurology, Physiology and Pharmacology
  A former member of the Neurology faculty at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Baird came to Downstate from the National Institutes of Health where she was chief of the Stroke Neuroscience Unit and Principal Investigator at the University of Maryland Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Dr. Baird lectures worldwide, has published over 90 peer-reviewed journal articles, is a Fellow of the European Stroke Council and a member of the American Academy of Neurology and the Stroke Council of the American Stroke Association.

- Daniel M. Rosenbaum, MD
  Professor and Chair, Department of Neurology
  Diplomate, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology: Vascular Neurology
  Prior to his appointment at Downstate, Dr. Rosenbaum was Vice-Chair of the Department of Neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine where he served as Professor of Ophthalmology and Neurology. He has also held the position of Director of the Stern Stroke Center at Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Rosenbaum is listed in the publications "Guide to America’s Top Physicians" and "Best Doctors in the New York Metro Area," has been honored with the Clinical Investigator Developmental Award by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and has published over 80 articles in major peer-reviewed journals.

- Sophia R. Sharfstein, MD
  Director, University Hospital of Brooklyn Stroke Service
  Assistant Professor of Neurology
  Diplomate, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
  Dr. Sharfstein has served as Assistant Professor of Neurology and Chief of Section for Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disorders at Nassau University Medical Center. She has numerous research, publications and education activities to her credit and is a member of the American Academy of Neurology and the Stroke Council of the American Heart Association.

- Sundeep Mangla, MD
  Director, Interventional Neuroradiology
  Associate Professor of Radiology, Neurosurgery, and Neurology
  Diplomate, American Board of Radiology
  Prior to his appointment at Downstate, Dr. Mangla was on faculty at Columbia University, Cornell University and Yale University School of Medicine. He has published dozens of journal articles and book chapters, is very active in research and clinical trials, and is a member of the Neurological Society and the American Society of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology.

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