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### **May is National Stroke Awareness Month: Know the Signs, Save a Life**

May is National Stroke Awareness Month. According to the American Heart Association, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. May is dedicated to raising public awareness of stroke and knowing the signs of stroke for early medical intervention. Time is precious when someone is having a stroke, and early intervention can save a life.

The American Heart Association recommends that everyone be aware of the warning signs of a stroke. The acronym **F.A.S.T.** can help you remember.

- F:** Face drooping
- A:** Arm weakness
- S:** Speech difficulty
- T:** Time to call 911

If you notice someone having these symptoms, the sooner treatment can start, the better the outcome. Note the time when any of the symptoms appear. Remember that someone having a stroke is an emergency!

A stroke can occur when a blood vessel that carries oxygen to the brain becomes blocked by a blood clot or bursts. When this happens, that part of the brain cannot get the oxygen it needs to function, and it begins to die. However, there are steps that you can take to reduce the risk of having a stroke.

- Don't smoke or vape. Also, avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Eat healthy foods low in saturated and trans-fat and reduce your sodium intake.
- Get regular exercise. Try to get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week.
- Limit alcohol consumption: one drink per day for women and two for men.
- Manage your blood pressure. Get your blood pressure checked regularly.
- Reduce your level of stress.
- Take your medications as directed.

If you believe you or someone you know is at risk of a stroke, contact your healthcare provider. Know the signs and take action if someone is suffering from a stroke.