

September 8th, 2014

Shine the spotlight on stroke this National Stroke Week

Health experts from South Western Sydney Local Health District are encouraging people to be aware of the risk factors of stroke this National Stroke Week (8-14 September).

One in six Australians will have a stroke, making it the second biggest killer after coronary heart disease.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Neurologist Dr John Worthington said people should act fast when they are concerned about any signs or symptoms, and should be aware of their risk and what they can do to prevent a stroke.

“Stroke kills more women than breast cancer and more men than prostate cancer,” Dr Worthington said.

“National Stroke Week is a timely reminder for us all to think about how we can reduce our risk factors for stroke.

“We are encouraging everyone to understand the six steps to work towards preventing stroke.”

The six steps are:

1. Know your personal risk factors: high blood pressure, diabetes and high blood cholesterol
2. Be physically active and exercise regularly
3. Avoid obesity by keeping to a healthy diet
4. Limit alcohol consumption
5. Avoid cigarette smoke, seek help to stop now
6. Learn to recognise the warning signs of stroke and act fast

Bankstown, Liverpool and Campbelltown Hospitals are accredited as specialist 24/7 Acute Stroke Thrombolysis Centres.

This means they can offer immediate access to clot-busting drugs that could save patients’ lives and reduce the risk of permanent brain damage and disability.

Dr Worthington said patients need to access this medication within four hours.

“Recognising the signs and symptoms of stroke and acting FAST by calling 000 will give you the best chance in treating stroke,” he said.

Symptoms of stroke may include:

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

For more details, visit www.strokefoundation.com.au