

3 May 2016

Call an ambulance at first sign of stroke

South Western Sydney Local Health District is joining the National Stroke Foundation in calling for south western Sydney residents to call an ambulance FAST at the first signs of stroke.

SWSLHD Stroke Service Clinical Nurse Consultant Angela Firtko said only around half of Australians know the signs of stroke and one in ten couldn't spot a stroke if it happened right in front of them.

"A stroke can cause the same kind of brain injury as a serious car crash and needs the same urgent medical treatment," Ms Firtko said.

"It is vital that patients call an ambulance rather than trying to drive to hospital themselves or be driven by a loved one.

"If you call an ambulance, you can begin receiving treatment immediately and they will take you directly to the most appropriate hospital for your condition," she said.

Ms Firtko said if the stroke was caused by a blood clot, a clot-busting drug may be given at Hospital to dissolve the clot.

"The sooner treatment is started, the better chance of a positive outcome, especially if special clot-busting medication is started within 4.5 hours from the onset of symptoms.

"So if you notice any stroke symptoms, be sure to think FAST and act FAST," she said.

To recognise the signs of stroke you need to think FAST:

Face - Has their mouth drooped?

Arms - Can they lift both arms

Speech - Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?

Time - is critical – call 000 straight away

Visit www.strokefoundation.com.au for more information.