



Senior Focus

A Guide to Healthy Living
For Seniors & Others



Can you recognize signs of stroke?

STATEPOINT - Many people are avoiding in-person doctor's visits to limit potential exposure to coronavirus -- or are simply ignoring health concerns altogether. However, when it comes to medical emergencies such as stroke, immediate medical attention is critical.

The fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., stroke occurs every 40 seconds and it can happen to anyone, of any age, at any time. When 59-year-old Paul "David" Dyches had a stroke on the job this past August, he quickly realized something was very wrong.

"I never experienced a feeling like this before, and I knew we had to do something right away," says Dyches, who was experiencing classic stroke symptoms of weakness in his arms and legs. Upon his arrival at the hospital, he was evaluated via tele-neurology by experts over 150 miles away. After doctors confirmed he was experiencing a stroke, they delivered treatment immediately and he was able to be discharged the following day.

While in some cases quick action can help with recovery, statistics suggest that many Americans may be avoiding hospitals when they need them most due to anxieties surrounding the pandemic. A recent study published in "JAMA Internal Medicine" showed that emergency room visits to five major healthcare systems decreased by more than 40 percent as COVID-19 cases spiked.

As patients such as Dyches are learning firsthand, hospitals have a range of protocols in place to help keep patients and staff safe from coronavirus infection.

"The hospital staff set me at ease right away," says Dyches.

Beyond pandemic fears, one age-old barrier to seeking timely medical attention for stroke is simply awareness of signs and symptoms. While Dyches can credit himself with recognizing a classic symptom -- arm and leg weakness -- and

reacting rapidly, only one in five U.S. adults are able to recognize 10 signs and symptoms of stroke, according to a nationwide survey*. What's more, nearly 70 percent of the survey respondents say they're knowledgeable about stroke, yet 62 percent falsely believe that signs of stroke come on slowly over a day or two, when in fact symptoms of stroke can come on suddenly.

Experts say that immediate medical attention, which is vital, relies on everyone learning and being able to recognize the BE FAST signs and symptoms of a stroke in themselves and others and calling 911 immediately. BE FAST stands for Balance, Eyes, Face, Arm, Speech, Time and refers to these signs of stroke:

- Balance: Sudden loss of balance
- Eyes: Loss of vision in one or both eyes
- Face: Face looks uneven or droopy
- Arm: Arm or leg is weak or hanging down
- Speech: Slurred speech, trouble speaking or seems confused
- Time: Immediately call 911

For more shareable information and resources, visit Strokeawareness.com, developed by Genentech Inc, a member of the Roche Group.

"I am a testament to the fact that emergencies like stroke don't stop for a global health pandemic," says Dyches. "Anyone who experiences stroke symptoms should call 911 and get themselves to the ER as quickly as possible."

"BE FAST" was developed by Intermountain Healthcare, as an adaptation of the FAST model implemented by the American Stroke Association. Reproduced with permission from Intermountain Healthcare. ©2011 Intermountain Healthcare. All rights reserved.

*On behalf of Genentech, a nationwide Stroke Awareness Survey was conducted on March 25 - April 10, 2020 among 2,009 adults ages 35+ in the U.S.

Resolve to achieve healthy sleep in 2021

BPT - According to a recent survey from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), 85% of U.S. adults do not get the recommended seven hours or more of sleep every night. After a challenging and stressful year, the New Year provides Americans with the opportunity to refocus on the importance of making healthy sleep a priority. "Our survey findings show a worrying trend of national sleep deprivation," said AASM president Dr. Kannan Ramar. "Insufficient sleep contributes to the risk for several of today's public health epidemics, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. As such, it is critical that we incorporate healthy sleep habits and routines into our daily lives to be our best in 2021."

Why should we make healthy sleep a New Resolution?

The AASM recommends that adults sleep at least seven hours each night to promote optimal health and well-being. In the same survey, slightly more than one-third (34%) of Americans said they sleep for seven or more hours only two nights - or fewer - each week, in line with findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Regularly sleeping less than seven hours per day is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and frequent mental distress. Resolve to make 365 days of healthy sleep your goal for 2021 by keeping in mind its extensive benefits:

- Sleep makes you healthier - Without good sleep, both mental and physical health suffer greatly, putting Americans at an increased risk of chronic disease.
- Sleep makes you happier - Sleep has a positive effect on mood and overall sense of well-being and can improve relationships with others.
- Sleep makes you smarter - Getting the right amount of sleep is conducive to learning, memory recall, creativity and cognitive function.



Courtesy BPT

The AASM recommends that adults sleep at least seven hours each night to promote optimal health and well-being.

What is inhibiting us from achieving the recommended seven hours of sleep?

Despite evidence showing the importance of adequate sleep, it often can take a back seat to other behaviors we find important. According to the AASM's July 2020 survey, a vast majority (68%) of U.S. adults lose sleep due to drinking alcohol past bedtime. Americans also report staying up past their bedtime to binge-watch a TV show or stream a video series (88%), read a book (66%), watch a sporting event (58%) and play video games (50%).

How has the pandemic impacted sleep?

With a change in daily routines, the COVID-19 pandemic is also disrupting sleep for Americans. According to the AASM survey, one in five Americans (22%) are sleeping worse due to the pandemic, and 19% are getting less nightly sleep. "Despite the fact that many Americans are no longer commuting to and from work, it is paramount to establish and maintain morning and bedtime rituals, such as getting up and going to bed at regular times to achieve adequate sleep," added Ramar.

What are some tips for healthy sleep?

- Obtain adequate sleep - Set a bedtime that allows you to get enough sleep so you wake up feeling refreshed and alert. Identify an appropriate bedtime for your age and lifestyle using the AASM bedtime calculator.
- Establish a bedtime and wake time routine - Consider developing a nightly routine that evokes calm and relaxation, which may include reading, journaling or medi-

tating. Even for those working remotely, allow ample time to wake, reflect and prepare for the day ahead.

- Ensure the bedroom is a space for sleep - Limit noise and distractions by making your bedroom quiet, dark and a little bit cool - and only use the bed for sleeping, not watching TV or reading.
- Set boundaries for blue light exposure - Consider setting a technology curfew by turning off your TV and other electronic devices 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime.

Silence your notifications and charge your devices away from your bed so you are not tempted to look at social media or news alerts.

- Limit alcohol, caffeine and large meals before bed - Avoid consuming caffeine after lunch and avoid alcohol near bedtime, as both can disrupt sleep. If hungry after dinner, keep snacks small, sugar-free and easily digestible so as to not disrupt sleep.

For more information on the importance of healthy sleep, visit SleepEducation.org.

You're healthy ... until you're not

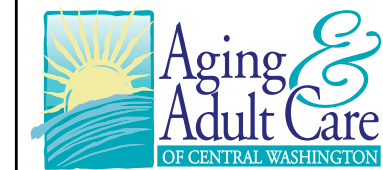


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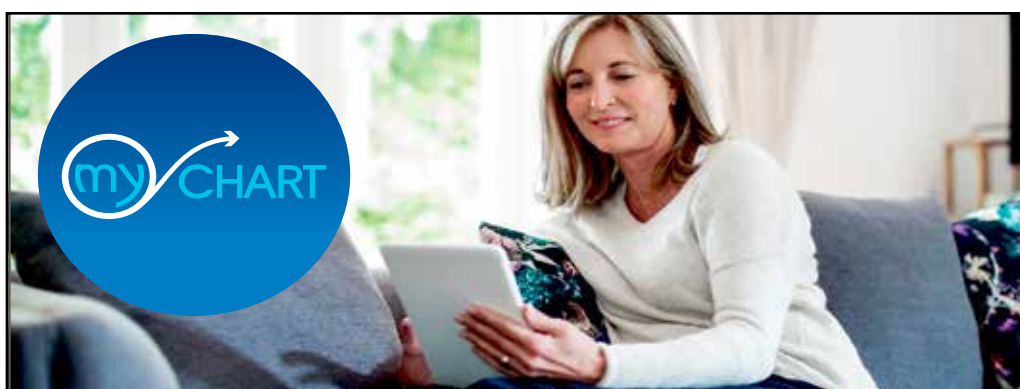


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Senior Focus

A Guide to Healthy Living For Seniors & Others



How to navigate Transitions of Care

By DR. LOUISE ACHEY,
DOCTOR OF PHARMACY

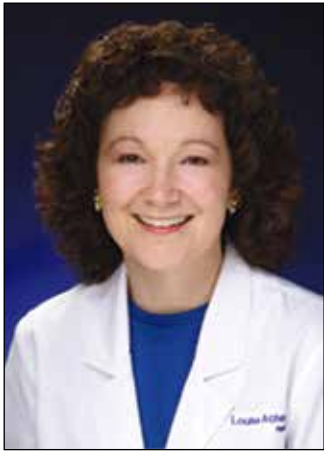
My stepmother is going to have her hip replaced next week. After the surgery, she will wake up in a recovery room and possibly stay overnight in the hospital. Afterward, she'll be discharged directly back to her home or to a skilled nursing facility (AKA a nursing home) for several weeks of strengthening therapy, called rehab.

Each time she moves from one health care setting to another, her doctors and nurses must communicate any vital information about her to the next person. Each time she moves from one care setting to another is called a Transition of Care.

Medical care is a lot like a relay race. When the nurse or doctor taking care of you goes off shift, another transition of care occurs, from them to the medical professional coming on shift. This "handoff" is where important information about you can easily get lost, leading to potentially serious problems.

That's what happened to Emma. My friend Sherry accepted the responsibility of being her widowed elderly aunt Emma's medical power of attorney, or POA. Emma fell the first week of January, breaking her hip, which required surgery and several weeks of rehabilitation at a local nursing home.

Emma received her first COVID vaccine while a resident of that nursing facility, then discharged back to her own



Dr. Louise Achey

home before it was time for her booster.

Sherry called me yesterday morning and asked, "How do I get Emma her booster shot of COVID vaccine? The nursing home says she'll have to go somewhere else."

I called the nursing facility to find out who gave her the initial COVID vaccine. They explained the vaccines were given by CVS, a pharmacy chain with a federal contract to immunize nursing home residents. CVS came and gave every resident their first COVID vaccination. They supposedly contacted anyone who had been discharged to register them for the booster. The company had just finished its last booster clinic the day before.

There are no CVS pharmacies in our area. I asked the nursing home for contact information to find out if CVS would be in any other nursing facilities in our area. Unfortunately, when I called them, no one could connect

me with whomever was administering the COVID vaccine. They couldn't even tell me who I could contact to find out more. It was like CVS swooped into town, gave the vaccine to those nursing home residents, then left without a trace.

When I asked for a copy of Emma's COVID vaccine card, the nursing home said they didn't have it anymore. They explained that it had been mailed to Emma's POA. Unfortunately, my friend never received it, so we recreated one from the nursing home records on a blank COVID vaccine card, documenting the date, manufacturer, and site where Emma received her COVID vaccine.

Although Emma received the Pfizer COVID vaccine, our local pharmacies only have the Moderna vaccine. Is it okay if Emma gets a Moderna booster?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that if someone residing in an assisted living or a nursing facility has moved, it is okay to get a booster with the Moderna vaccine even if the initial vaccine dose was from Pfizer and vice versa. Since they are both mRNA vaccines, the CDC states that it is acceptable.

The CDC now states you can delay getting the booster beyond the 3 weeks recommended by the manufacturer for the Pfizer COVID vaccine or the 4-week booster recommended for the Moderna vaccine. Up to 6 weeks is considered acceptable, especially in light of the

recent weather-related delays in shipping the vaccines.

Here are 4 ways to protect yourself or loved one during Transitions of Care

1. Make a current list of all your medications, and keep it updated.

This is especially important when coming home from the hospital or nursing home. There may be changes or duplications during the time you or your loved one have been away.

2. Bring your discharge summary paperwork to your next medical appointment.

Doctor's offices are not always kept informed of what happens to you during a recent hospitalization. Bringing the latest information with you helps to keep everyone in the loop.

3. Ask. With COVID restrictions making face-to-face discussions rare, misunderstandings are commonplace. Medical providers stretched for time and may not take the time to explain the plan of care.

4. Be a Squeaky Wheel. Speak up whenever something doesn't seem right to you. You may be the only one who notices an omission or discrepancy.

Dr. Louise Achey, Doctor of Pharmacy, is a 40-year veteran of pharmacology and author of *Why Dogs Can't Eat Chocolate: How Medicines Work and How You Can Take Them Safely. Get clear answers to your medication questions at her website and blog TheMedicationInsider.com.* ©2021 Louise Achey



Courtesy StatePoint

Made of skin-safe, medical-grade, adhesive tape, MaskTite strips eliminate common mask problems like gaps, fogging glasses and slipping, and are sized for adults and children.

How and why to improve the fit of your mask

STATEPOINT - As more Americans get vaccinated against COVID-19, you may find yourself out and about more. Whether you're returning to the workplace or just getting a haircut, mask requirements may be in place in certain venues you frequent. New Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations highlight the importance of snugly fitting masks. The good news is that innovations are helping people secure the fit of their masks, and, at the same time, solve some of the most common complaints they have when wearing them.

"As we began to wear masks in 2020, we found ourselves frustrated by things like fogging glasses and slipping masks. Our team has extensive experience solving health-related challenges and thought there had to be a way to address this," says Dave Franchino, co-founder at MaskTite, a company that makes a medical-grade, double-sided tape designed to adhere to the inside of a mask for a more secure fit.

Franchino, with his background in medical product design, set to work with his team to design a way to give people of all face sizes and shapes a fast and easy way to make every mask fit better. Made of skin-safe, medical-grade, adhesive tape, MaskTite strips eliminate common mask problems like gaps, fogging glasses and slipping, and are sized for adults and children.

Here Franchino explains how to solve some of most common mask woes, some of which you've likely experienced:

- Loose fit and slipping masks: Readjusting your mask when it starts to slip is not always possible, whether it's because you have your

hands full of groceries or work tools or you simply want to avoid touching your face. Keeping the mask affixed to your face with tape can eliminate slipping when it matters most, and achieve a tighter fit, supporting the latest CDC recommendations.

- Foggy glasses: The warm air of your breath escaping from the top of your mask can quickly make glasses foggy, causing a new hazard -- an inability to see. While it can be tough to find a mask that fits securely enough to eliminate fog, applying a solution like MaskTite to the inside of your mask means you can get a proper fit and better visibility, no matter what mask you're using.

- Irritating straps: A tight-fitting mask is great in many respects, but the straps can put a strain on the backs of one's ears. Plus, there are times when mask straps can simply be in the way, such as when you're getting a haircut. Securing your mask to your face with tape means you can go strap-free.

Waterproof and hypoallergenic: MaskTite strips can improve mask fit in a variety of environments, including healthcare, schools, retail and restaurant settings, salons, offices, manufacturing and more. Packaged in a resealable, plastic pouch that's easy to throw into a pocket, purse, backpack or briefcase, they are currently available for sale through Amazon. MaskTite is made in the U.S. from U.S. materials. Learn more at MaskTite.com.

"From fogging glasses to slipping, nearly every issue that stems from wearing a mask is related to the mask's fit. For those spending a lot of time in a mask, at school, work or elsewhere, a good mask-wearing experience can make all the difference," says Franchino.

6 Ways to tell if you have enough life insurance

STATEPOINT - If we've learned anything from 2020, it's that life can be unpredictable. Having sufficient life insurance can provide financial stability and security to loved ones during times of uncertainty.

Forty-one million Americans say they need life insurance but don't have it, according to LIMRA's 2020 Insurance Barometer Study. Others are insured but don't have enough coverage. If this describes you, your spouse or children could find themselves in a financial lurch, expected to pay off debts, loans and final expenses when you die, especially if you're the main source of income.

"Having insurance isn't just about financial protection," says Louis Colaizzo, senior vice president of Erie Family Life. "It also helps maintain some sense of normalcy for family members. Kids can continue their extracurricular activities,

partners can maintain their lifestyle and families can stay in the home they know and love."

So, how do you know if you have enough? An annual reminder to financially protect loved ones, here are six questions from insurance experts to help you find out.

1. Do you have enough to cover final expenses? Make sure you can accommodate funeral or burial expenses, end-of-life costs or unpaid medical bills. Otherwise, your family may be responsible for paying these. According to the National Funeral Directors Association, the national median cost of a funeral with viewing and burial for 2019 was \$7,640 -- a steep sum many can't pay out of pocket without notice.

2. Will your family receive enough to cover income loss or debt? If you're your household's primary earner, you'll want to ensure

you have enough money to maintain your family's lifestyle. For example, can your policy help pay off a mortgage or multiple car loans in full or cover expenses like groceries? If not, your spouse or dependents might find themselves struggling, putting them at risk for foreclosure or other financial hardships.

3. Do you have dependents? A dependent is someone who relies on your income to make ends meet. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average cost of raising a child through age 17 is \$233,610, not including the cost of a college education. That's a big strain.

4. What kind of retirement do you want? How do you guarantee you'll have enough for the future and won't need a second career late in life to cover living expenses? One way is to tap into the cash value of a permanent life insurance plan and use it as supplemental income during retirement.

5. Do you have unique

lifestyle considerations? Do you own a business or want to leave a legacy when you're gone? Having an insurance plan will protect these assets and give you peace of mind that your money goes exactly where you want it.

6. What if your circumstances change (again)? Some life insurance companies, offer a Guaranteed Insurability Option rider to help with the quickly changing times, making it possible for you to purchase additional insurance later, even if circumstances deem you "uninsurable." This means the death benefit can be increased as your needs change but you won't have to answer medical underwriting questions -- a relief for many.

To revisit your life insurance policy, contact an independent insurance agent who can discuss your personal options by visiting erieinsurance.com.

According to experts, one of the easiest ways to protect loved ones and their financial futures is to prepare for the unexpected.



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