



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Watch Those Signs*

*Disparities in Adult Awareness of Stroke Warning Signs and Symptoms — 14 States, 2005*

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*[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Trouble speaking or walking. Sudden vision problems. Confusion. Numbness or weakness in the face and arms, especially if it's on just one side of the body. These could all be symptoms of a stroke. Strokes are the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of disabilities among adults in the United States. Prompt treatment can help prevent death or severe and permanent disability, such as paralysis or impaired mental function.

Dr. Rob Merritt is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Dr. Merritt is joining us by phone today to discuss ways to prevent death and disability caused by strokes. Welcome to the show, Rob.

[Dr. Merritt] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Rob, is the prevalence of strokes on the rise in the United States?

[Dr. Merritt] Actually, while the mortality in the United States has declined dramatically since the 60s, the numbers of deaths that occur before patients are transported to the hospital has increased to nearly half of all stroke deaths.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can people do to decrease their risk for a stroke?

[Dr. Merritt] As with other cardiovascular diseases, eating well and regular exercise would be beneficial.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common symptoms of a stroke?

[Dr. Merritt] Some of the more common signs and symptoms of a stroke are sudden confusion or trouble speaking; numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, particularly if it favors one side over the other; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; trouble walking; dizziness or loss of balance; and a severe headache with no known cause.

[Dr. Gaynes] What should a person do if they or someone they know is experiencing any of these symptoms?

[Dr. Merritt] Well, they should seek immediate help to ensure that their condition is being properly diagnosed and that they receive the appropriate care.

[Dr. Gaynes] What treatments are available to lessen the impact of a stroke?

[Dr. Merritt] There are both drug treatments and surgical treatments, but the important thing to remember is that you need to receive these within three hours of symptom onset so that you can lower your risk of disability or even death.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about strokes?

[Dr. Merritt] At our website at [www.cdc.gov/dhdsp](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp).

[Dr. Gaynes] Rob, thanks for sharing this information with our listeners today.

[Dr. Merritt] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] That's it for this week's show. Be sure and join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

*[Announcer]* For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.