



## Stroke? Experts say get to Lincoln Hospital FAST!

**(Oct. 2008)** Chest pain? Because of the successful Level One Cardiac Care partnership, Lincoln County residents now know to get to Lincoln Hospital FIRST at any sign on a heart attack.

Now folks with signs of stroke are being told by the experts at Sacred Heart their best chance of survival is to get to Lincoln Hospital FAST.

"With stroke, time is brain," says Fred Reed, MD, of Lincoln Hospital. "Living in a rural area, we're really racing the clock, so this streamlined program to diagnose and treat stroke patients in a fast, effective manner is crucial here."

Patterned after the Level One Cardiac Care partnership, FAST Stroke will expedite care for potential stroke patients.

"Our plan is to get stroke patients an immediate general assessment, then in to the CT scan as quickly as possible," says Dr. Reed. "The CT images will be digitally transmitted to a waiting radiologist at Inland Imaging who will tell us if we're dealing with a blockage (clot) or a bleed."

If a blockage is diagnosed, Lincoln Hospital physicians will be ready with IV medications to break up the clot. However, special interventions including surgery, are needed for a bleed.

"That's when we call our partners at Northwest MedStar Critical Care Transport and Sacred Heart's Neuro-Stroke lab. As MedStar is in the air, the neuro-stroke team is assembling to check the CT scan and prepare for your arrival."

The program will not only save time in diagnosis and transport, but give stroke victims a fast reservation with Sacred Heart Medical Center's neuro-stroke team.

"As they've already assembled, studied the films and have communicated with us and MedStar on the patient's condition, valuable time will be saved. Time that could mean better quality of life," says Reed. "We're hoping these guidelines will become lifelines."

Not only is using the protocol fast, but FAST is an easy way for anyone to recognize the signs of stroke so they can seek immediate medical attention.

- **Face:** Does the face look uneven? Ask them to smile.
- **Arms:** Does one arm drift down? Ask them to raise both arms.
- **Speech:** Does their speech sound strange? Ask them to repeat a simple phrase such as, "The grass is greener." Can they do it? Are their words slurred?
- **Time** to get help! **Call 9-1-1 immediately at any sign of a stroke** and get to Lincoln Hospital.

"It's very important for the community to learn these steps," says Dr. Reed. "All the CT scans, medication and surgery in the world can't help if no one recognizes the signs of a stroke. We need the community's help to save lives. Learn FAST and call for an ambulance if there is even one symptom."

So remember, heart attack or stroke – Lincoln Hospital FIRST and FAST!

*Implementation of the FAST Stroke protocol is funded by a grant from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy through the Washington State Department of Health. To find out more, log on to [www.lincolnhospital.org](http://www.lincolnhospital.org).*