ACUTE STROKE
CARE

A stroke occurs when blood stops flowing to any part of the brain, damaging brain cells. It is a medical emergency and very time-sensitive. Heart and Stroke recommends using the FAST method to determine if you or someone you know is suffering a stroke. FAST stands for:

- Face: is it drooping?

- Arms: can you raise both?

- Speech: is it slurred or jumbled?

- Time: to call 911 right away.

Stroke treatment is delivered at sites across Manitoba as part of an integrated provincial program.

- Clot busting – For ischemic stroke or stroke caused by a blood clot, tissue plasminogen activator is given via intravenous therapy, and works to dissolve the clot and improve blood flow to the part of the brain being deprived of the oxygen and nutrients it needs.

- Clot removal – A physician may insert a small mechanical device into the blocked artery using a thin tube. The tool traps the clot and it is pulled out, reopening the blocked blood vessel in the process. This treatment can cut the death rate in half.

- Early, intensive rehabilitative care – This type of care is effective in preventing stroke complications and improving functional outcomes for certain stroke patients.

- Telestroke – A 24-7 emergency consultation videoconferencing service provides emergency physicians across the province with immediate access to neurologists with expertise in stroke care. The service uses CT image-sharing technology to allow stroke specialists located in an urban centre to examine patients at rural and northern hospitals in order to diagnose and recommend a plan of care, which may involve treatment locally or may require transportation to Winnipeg. Telestroke is available in Thompson, The Pas, Dauphin, Brandon, Bethesda Regional Health Centre, Boundary Trails Health Centre and Portage District General Hospital.

Patients need to call 911 if they experience symptoms of a stroke. Paramedics will screen them to determine the closest hospital providing the patient's needed stroke services and will transport the patient.