Approximately every 40 seconds, someone experiences a stroke in the US.

Physical and mental deficits from stroke range from mild to severe. The most common results of a stroke are:

- Hemiparesis (paralysis on one side of the body)
- Aphasia (inability to speak or understand language)
- Learning difficulties
- Memory loss
- Behavioral /emotional changes
- Loss of motor skills

Some risk factors that increase the chances of a stroke

- High Blood Pressure
- Atrial Fibrillation
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Drug / Alcohol Abuse
- Age / Gender
- Heredity

How to prevent a stroke

- Maintain a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly
- Limit alcohol use
- Don’t smoke
- Stay active
- Have your cholesterol checked regularly
- Monitor your blood pressure
- Talk to your health care provider

To contact a stroke coordinator, call 240-964-1081.
What is a stroke?
A stroke is the rapidly developing loss of brain function due to a disturbance in the brain’s blood supply. It is a medical emergency and can cause permanent neurological damage, complications and death. Stroke can happen to anyone at any time, regardless of age, race or sex.

There are three types of strokes:
- **ISCHEMIC** stroke occurs when arteries are blocked by blood clots (embolic) or by the gradual build-up of plaque due to cholesterol. The blood supply is cut off to the brain cells and an area of the brain tissue dies. Approximately 87% of all strokes are ischemic.
- **HEMORRHAGIC** stroke is caused when a blood vessel in the brain ruptures. Hemorrhagic strokes account for 13% of strokes, yet are responsible for more than 30% of stroke-related deaths.
- **TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK (TIA)**, also known as a “mini-stroke” happens when the blood supply is cut off and suddenly returns (dislodged clot or plaque) and there is no brain tissue death. TIAs are a serious warning sign of stroke. Up to 40% of those who suffer a TIA will go on to experience a stroke.

What are the symptoms?
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding others
- Sudden impaired vision in one or both eyes
- Sudden dizziness, difficulty walking, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you experience any of these symptoms or see them in someone else, even for a short time, call 911 immediately.

What to expect at the hospital
Stroke victims are admitted and cared for by providers and nurses that are trained in assessing stroke patients.
- Patients are evaluated prior to being allowed to eat in order to avoid aspiration pneumonia.
- Physical therapists and/or occupational therapists evaluate patients to help ensure safety.
- Several tests are performed to help providers determine the cause of the stroke.
- After all testing is complete, the provider discharges the patient on medications to help reduce the risk of another stroke.

The Stroke Center at Western Maryland Health System (WMHS) is our area’s most advanced center for the diagnosis, management and prevention of stroke. WMHS has been designated a Primary Stroke Center by the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS) and has received the Gold Plus Award from the American Stroke Association’s Get with the Guidelines program.

Stroke: There’s A Treatment If You Act FAST

- **FACE** Look for uneven smile or drooping
- **ARM** Check if arm is weak or hanging down
- **SPEECH** Is their speech slurred or jumbled?
- **TIME** If you see any one of these signs, call 911