



## Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street  
Newark, OH 43055

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Stroke Care**. You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health!  
**Visit us at [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org)**

A publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department at (740) 348-1572. Please contact the Public Relations Department to receive future mailings.

The articles contained in this publication should not be considered specific medical advice as each individual circumstance is different. Should you need medical advice, consult your physician. Entire publication copyrighted 2008 Licking Memorial Health Systems. All rights reserved.



## Community Report Card Licking Memorial Health Systems

(740) 348-4000 (phone) • [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org)



Volume 9, Issue 7

July 2008

## A Community Report on Stroke Care

### Health Tips

#### "Give Me 5 for Stroke"

The national Stroke Collaborative, comprised of the American Academy of Neurology, the American College of Emergency Physicians, and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, has developed the "Give Me 5 for Stroke" campaign to help the public identify warning signs of stroke. If any of the following five symptoms develops in a person suddenly, call 9-1-1 and get the person to the Emergency Room.

- Walk – Is the person's balance off?
- Talk – Is speech slurred, or is the face droopy?
- Reach – Is one side of the body weak or numb?
- See – Is the person's vision all or partially lost?
- Feel – Is the person having a severe headache?

Remember – a quick response can save lives and limit a stroke's damage!

# Stroke Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare them to benchmark measures. Then, we publish them so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your health care choices.

- 1 A person who has symptoms of a stroke needs to seek emergency medical care immediately. A thrombolytic, or “clot-busting,” drug must be given within three hours after the initial onset of symptoms. To determine if a patient is a candidate for a thrombolytic drug, it is vital that a CT scan be performed before the drug is given.

	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	LMH 2007	Goal <sup>(1)</sup>
Median time from door to doctor	15	20	11	less than 10 minutes
Median time from door to CT scan	54	51	38	less than 25 minutes
Median time from door to drug	81	55	76	less than 60 minutes

Note: Data published in previous years' reports have been updated for this report to reflect only patients who arrived at the Emergency Department soon enough after their symptoms began to be candidates for thrombolytic drug therapy.

- 2 A stroke can affect a person’s ability to swallow. Stroke patients should receive a swallowing evaluation to make sure they can swallow well enough to eat or take oral medication.

	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	LMH 2007	Benchmark <sup>(2)</sup>
Stroke patients who received a swallowing evaluation before eating	83%	71%	74%	73%

- 3 Beginning rehabilitation as soon as it can be done safely can help improve recovery for stroke patients. Rehabilitation may include physical therapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy.

	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	LMH 2007	Goal
Received appropriate therapy	88%	97%	97%	100%

- 4 Evidence-based medicine supports quality by giving a blood-thinning medication (such as aspirin) by the second day of hospitalization after a stroke and ordering the medication at discharge. Blood-thinning medication prevents clots from forming and improves blood flow.

	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	LMH 2007	Benchmark <sup>(2)</sup>
Eligible patients receiving blood-thinning medication	97%	95%	98%	96%
Patients with blood-thinning medication at discharge	99%	99%	94%	92%

- 5 Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) office-based physicians use evidence-based measures in order to provide excellent, quality care to patients. The American Stroke Association and American Heart Association recommend the use of blood-thinning medication in order to prevent clots from forming and to improve blood flow. It is also recommended to have an annual LDL cholesterol test.

	LMHP 2005 <sup>(3)</sup>	LMHP 2006	LMHP 2007	Goal
LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen receiving blood-thinning medication	98%	93%	93%	greater than 80%
LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen who have had an annual LDL test	98%	91%	91%	greater than 80%

## Data Footnotes:

(1) Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. *Diagnosis and initial treatment of ischemic stroke*; 2003 Oct., 65p.

(2) Most recent benchmark from VHA Central Key Clinical Indicator Project.

(3) LMHP average during 2005 was reported for patients seen for an office visit. Values in 2006 and 2007 reflect an active patient population, which is defined as patients seen within the past 3 years.

# Patient Story – William Freeman

William Freeman says he is determined that he will overcome any aftereffects of a stroke he suffered in April. Since he enthusiastically embraced his prescribed physical therapy regimen, he has achieved most of that goal already.



William and Rose Freeman have been married 10 years.

On the evening of Friday, April 4, William was at home when he began to notice something did not seem right. William, a 63-year-old retired

construction worker, had previously had a heart attack in 1996. “I started to take an aspirin every day after my heart attack, and that was the only medication I was on,” he explained. “But I just was not feeling right. My right leg was not working, so I had my wife, Rose, drive me to the Emergency Room.”

When William arrived at the Emergency Room at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) on Saturday, April 5, the triage team determined that he had very high blood pressure. An MRI and CT scan showed that he had blood clots on both sides of his brain. The diagnosis was ischemic stroke, meaning he had reduced or blocked blood flow to part of his brain – a very dangerous situation.

“I cannot stress enough how important it is to seek help without delay if you start having symptoms of a heart attack or stroke,” Emergency Physician John Wells, D.O., said. “If a patient comes in within three hours after a stroke begins, we can often reverse the damage with thrombolytic, or clot-busting, drugs. William was very fortunate to have limited damage.” William was prescribed a combination of aspirin and dipyridamole, a cholesterol-lowering medication and an antihypertensive agent to reduce the likelihood of another stroke. He was also given a swallowing evaluation to make sure he could swallow food properly. On Monday, April 7, he had recovered enough to be dismissed from the Hospital and return directly to his home instead of an extended care facility.

While in the Hospital, Neurologist Jason Barfield, M.D., of Licking Memorial Neurology, examined William and arranged for follow-up care in cooperation with William’s primary care physician, David Walker, D.O. The physicians referred William to Licking Memorial Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy to reduce any disabilities caused by the stroke.

“They are great people over there in Physical Therapy,” William said. “They make you keep trying without making you feel like giving up. They gave me exercises to do at home – things like knee bends and squeezing a ball of clay with my hands. The physical therapist can really tell if you are practicing at home or not – you can’t fool the man!” William joked.

William said the effort he put into therapy paid off quickly. “I went to therapy for five weeks. When I first started going, I was using a wheelchair, then I went to a walker, and now I’m using a cane. After another couple of months, I plan to put the cane away,” he said. “I really appreciate what they did for me. But I know you also have to do it for yourself, too. I’m keeping up with my therapy at home three days a week.”

As William regains his physical strength and confidence, he and Rose are enjoying their retirement together. “I watch TV and do some shopping,” he said. “I started going back to the Eagles again. It is time to get out and move around a little bit more. I have been running the vacuum cleaner, but have not had to wash the dishes yet. I do a little something; sit down, then do a little more, and sit down again. We can always find something to do.”

# Thrombolytic Drugs Can Reverse Stroke Damage



Jason Barfield,  
M.D.

Every 45 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke. There are basically two types of stroke: an ischemic stroke which occurs where a blood vessel to the brain is blocked by a blood clot; and a hemorrhagic stroke which occurs when a blood vessel to the brain ruptures. In either case, if the blood flow to the brain is stopped for more than a few seconds,

brain cells begin to die. The damage can be debilitating and even fatal.

The good news is that medical teams are now able to reverse some of the damage from a stroke if the patient comes to the Emergency Room quickly enough. “Many times, a patient will know that something is wrong, but will try to ‘wait and see’ in case the symptoms subside,” explained Jason Barfield, M.D., a neurologist with Licking Memorial Neurology. “However, every minute that a stroke is left untreated, more damage will result to the brain. It is imperative that patients who suddenly begin to have symptoms of a stroke come in for evaluation immediately. If they arrive within three hours of the onset of symptoms, we may even be able to reverse the damage with thrombolytic, or clot-busting, drugs.”

The symptoms of a stroke include having trouble walking or maintaining balance, having trouble with speech or vision, sudden numbness or weakness (especially on one side of the body) and sudden confusion. These symptoms may last for only a few minutes, but even then they should not be ignored. Oftentimes, short “mini-strokes” are indicators of future major strokes.

“I cannot stress enough how important it is for the patient to seek help immediately when these symptoms occur,” Dr. Barfield stated. “Recently, one patient recognized the symptoms and came to Licking Memorial Hospital immediately. We were able to administer the thrombolytic drugs, and that patient was well enough to go home within a couple of days – with no signs of stroke damage. That is the kind of result we hope to see.”

Some people are at a higher risk of suffering stroke. Risk factors include:

- Gender (men are at more risk)
- Age
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Family history of stroke
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Birth control pills
- Cocaine use
- Alcohol abuse
- Head injury
- Bleeding disorders
- Pregnancy

There are preventive measures that can help to ward off stroke. These include exercising for at least 30 minutes most days of the week, following a diet that is high in fiber and low in saturated fats, quitting smoking and losing excess weight.



**Check out our new and improved Web site at [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org) with more options to better serve you!**

**LMHS' Web site now offers:**

- Bill Pay
- Pre-Registration
- My Health Patient Information
- Physician Office Appointment Requests, Test Results and Medication Renewals

**Our Web site also provides:**

- Health Information
- Send a Patient Greeting
- Find a Physician
- Maps and Directions
- Virtual Tours
- Online Application for Employment

**1320 West Main Street • Newark, OH 43055  
(740) 348-4000 • [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org)**

Check out our quality Community Report Cards on our Web site.