

# LEARNING ABOUT CVA'S

DISEASE MANAGEMENT BROCHURE Vol. 2, No 2, 2008

## ACCESS NURSING SERVICES



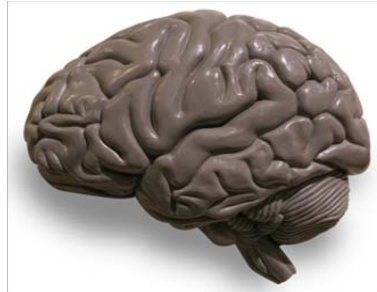
### What is a CVA ?

**Cerebral Vascular Accident or Stroke** is a cardiovascular disease that affects the blood vessels supplying blood to the brain. A CVA is sometimes called a brain attack, or cerebral infarction.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the country, after heart disease and cancer.

A CVA occurs when a blood vessel bringing oxygen and nutrients to the brain bursts or is clogged by a blood clot. Because of this rupture or blockage, part of the brain doesn't get the flow of blood it needs.

When brain cells die, abilities which were controlled by that area of the brain are lost. These might include speech, movement, and memory.



### What causes a CVA?

#### Ischemic Stroke

- It is most common kind of Stroke.
- An Ischemic Stroke is caused by a blood vessel that blocks or plugs a blood vessel in the brain
- It accounts for approximately 80% of all CVA's.

#### Hemorrhagic Stroke

- A hemorrhagic Stroke is caused by a blood vessel that breaks and bleeds into the brain.
- Because of rupture, part of the brain doesn't get the flow of blood it needs.
- It accounts for approximately 20% of all CVA's

#### Transient Ischemic Attack [TIA]

- A transient Ischemic Attack is a "mini" or warning stroke that's caused by a temporary decrease of blood flow and may be a warning of a stroke.
- Even though the symptoms of a TIA don't last long, they should be taken very seriously. A TIA could mean that a major stroke is on its way and should be taken immediately to prevent the occurrence of a CVA.

### Symptoms of a CVA—DANGER

- D** Dizziness, trouble walking, loss
- A** Absentmindedness, sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- N** Numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg
- G** Garbled speech or slurred speech
- E** Eye problems, including temporary loss of sight or double vision
- R** Recent onset of severe headache with no known cause

## The Effects of a CVA—Right Brain

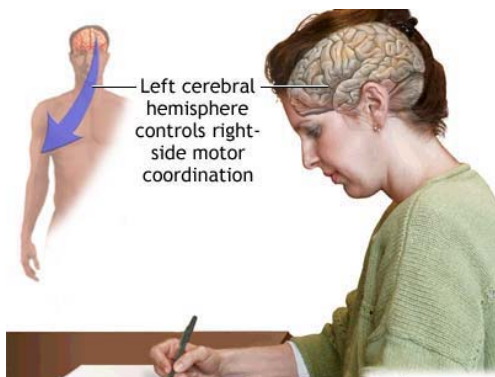
The **right side** of the brain controls movement of the **left side** of the body. It judges distance, size, speed or position. A CVA in the right brain can cause paralysis in the left side of the body.

Here's what you may see in a client that has suffered a right-sided stroke:

- Not being able to judge distances (which can lead to falls)
- Unable to guide their hands to pick up an object, button a shirt or tie their shoes.
- Short term memory loss. They may be able to remember their daughter's graduation but not remember what they had for breakfast.



## The Effects of a CVA—Left Brain



The **left side** of the brain controls movement of the **right side**. It controls speech and language. A CVA in the left side brain can cause paralysis of the right side of the body.

Here's what you may see in a client that has suffered a left-sided stroke:

- Aphasia or speech problems
- Difficulty writing, reading or understanding speech or language.
- May need frequent instructions.
- May have difficulty remembering things.



## Chain of Survival

Every CVA or TIA must be treated as a life-threatening emergency. Timing is very important. A client suffering from a CVA can receive a clot-busting drug or other treatment within **3 hours** of the onset of symptoms. To increase changes of surviving a CVA, following these 5 steps:

1. Rapid recognition of the signs and symptoms of stroke. Make a note of when they first occur.
2. Rapid activation of the EMS. Call 911 immediately. Tell them that you have a client with stroke warning signs and symptom
3. Rapid EMS transport and notifying the hospital ahead of time. Get the client to the hospital quickly via EMS—they will notify the ER that a possible stroke victim is on the way.
4. Rapid start pre-hospital care during EMS transport. EMS will do an early assessment and provide treatment on the way to the hospital.
5. Rapid diagnosis and treatment at the hospital. Doctors must make a prompt evaluation of the medical information and give the victim treatment to restore blood flow to the brain.



## Meeting the Emotional needs of a CVA client...

■ Clients who were physically independent before having a CVA may now have physical limitation. Feeling helpless can cause clients to become frustrated and upset.

■ Clients who've recently had a CVA often lose emotional control.

■ Sometimes, CVA survivors cry because they're depressed.

■ Loss of emotional control due to brain injury often happens no matter

what is happening around the person.

- Have them feed themselves if they're able.

- Listen when they talk about their feelings.

- Keep in mind that clients who have suffered a CVA may become frustrated easily. Be patient with them and let them work at their own pace.

- Depression can make someone feel restless or tired, have no appetite,

and/or sleep too much. Watch out for these signs of depression in your clients.

- Ask the client's family or friends what they liked and disliked before the stroke occurred.

- If you can, try to interrupt the emotional behavior (crying, laughing or anger) by snapping your fingers.



## Meeting the Behavioral needs of a CVA client..

### Risk Factors

- High Blood Pressure
- Cigarette Smoking
- Diabetes
  - TIAs
- Heart Disease

■ Those who suffer from a CVA on the **left side** tend to be slow, cautious and disorganized when faced with an unfamiliar problem.

- Tell the client that she/he is doing the right thing.

- When a client is getting dressed, divide the task into several steps and give feedback after each one is finished.

- After each step has been completed, let your

clients know that they have done it correctly. If there is a mistake, wait to see they correct it. If they don't correct the mistake, mention the error, give a hint, and then let them know when they have done the task correctly.

■ Those who suffer a right brain CVA tend to be impulsive and too fast.

- Watch to see what your clients can safely do rather than just taking their word for it.

- Use verbal cues if they have trouble demonstrating skills.

- Break task into small steps and give lots of feedback. Since these stroke victims tend to be impulsive, encourage them to slow down and carefully check each step as it's completed.

- Minimize any clutter that's around them.

- Avoid quick movement around them.

## Meeting the Communication needs of a CVA client...

■ CVA victims may have trouble saying what they're thinking. Aphasia affects the ability to talk, listen read and write. It is most common when a stroke weakens the right side of the body.

- Talk slowly and clearly.
- Keep your voice low and unhurried.

- Use simple, everyday words, but don't use

"baby talk" or any other special voices.

- Don't speak loudly or your client may find understanding you harder than usual. Practice talking in short simple phrases instead of shouting.

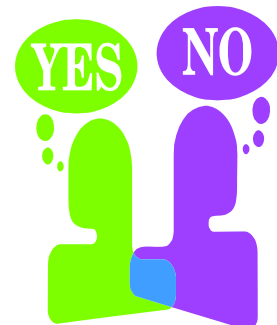
- Face clients directly when speaking. Don't speak to them suddenly from behind, or you might

scare them.

- Ask one "yes" or "no" question at a time.

- Repeat the question using the same words if the client doesn't answer you.

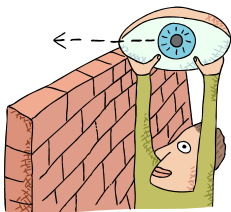
- Watch to Be sure to call your clients by name and be respectful, saying things like "thank you", "please", or "no sir".



## Tips for Helping Clients with a CVA

### Visual Field Defects

- Arrange furniture so things are on the non-affected side since after stroke.
- Arrange clothes so they hang on the non-affected side.
- Make sure there are no throw rugs or stairs that may cause the client to fall.
- Don't leave any electric cords in the middle of the floor.
- Encourage the client to wear non-skid shoes.
- Point out important objects and things of interest in a calm manner. Don't say things like: "why don't you turn your head to see?" Instead say, "Look over here and you'll see..."



### Memory Problem

- Give only brief, simple message. Break your information into pieces.
- Don't speak in long sentences: instead, use short phrases.
- Use things that help your client's memory. Such as a calendar, written notes or scheduled cards whenever possible.



- Follow the same schedule whenever possible.
- Present new information one step at a time.
- Allow the person to finish one step before going on to the next.

### Fall Prevention when Walking

- Have your client sit on the side of the bed for 1-2 minutes BEFORE trying to stand or move to a chair.
- Provide low heeled shoes with non-slip soles.
- Put the back of your client's chair against a wall so it won't remove when he gets up or sits down.



- To help client stand up, place yourself in front of your client, put your forearms under his armpits, bend your knees, then lift-not your back.
- If you're walking beside your client and he/she begins to fall, put your arms under his armpits and lower him/her to the floor with you gently.
- Remove area or throw rugs and tape down edges of large rugs.

Did you know that if you drink one glass of orange juice a day  
you can decrease the risk of stroke by 25%?

- Don't wax floors.
- Put furniture along walls.
- Pad sharp corners on shelves and furniture by taping a small towel on the corners.
- Move electrical and telephone cords from out of the walk areas.
- Mop up spills on the floor immediately throughout the house.
- Keep small lights on at night.

### Fall Prevention in the Bathroom

- Put grab bars by the tub or shower.
- Use a chair in the tub or shower.
- Stay near the bathroom so that your patient can call for help when he/she is finished.
- Put non-slip strips or a mat in the tub or shower.
- Put all items client might need within easy reach.
- Keep bedside commode, bedpan, or urinal close to the bed within reach.
- Put a bell or whistle by the bed so your client can call you.

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## POST TEST

Please circle the best choice and then check your answers with educator. **You may submit this paper to your coordinator or send by mail to office.**

1. True or False

High blood pressure is a risk factor that can not be changed.

2. True or False

CVA 's occur when a blood vessel bring oxygen and nutrients to the brain is clogged by the blood clot.

3. True or False

If a stroke victim has aphasia, client will be bedbound.

4. True or False

A transient ischemic attack, or TIA is another name for a full-brown stroke.

5. True or False

Dizziness, trouble walking, loss of balance or coordination are warning sign of a stroke.

6. True or False

If you think your clients having a stroke, you should wait to see if the sigh and symptoms get worse.

7. True or False

Cigarette smoking has been linked to the buildup of fatty substances in the carotid artery .



8. When working with CVA clients, caregiver should :

- A. make sure they drink plenty of water
- B. speak slowly and clearly in short, simple sentence

C. finish a task for them if they are having trouble doing it themselves

- D. change the subject whenever they begin to talk about feeling depressed

9. Mr. Smith is having a stroke. To prevent falls in the bathroom, you should not:

- A. use a chair in the tub or shower

- B. keep commode, bedpan away from the bed

C. put non-slip strips or a mat in the tub or shower

- D. stay near the bathroom so that your client can call for help

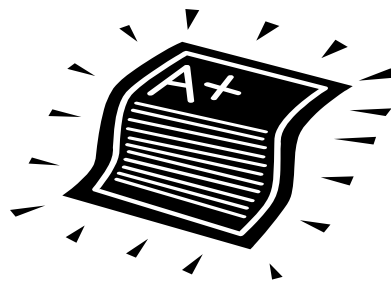
10. When your client has trouble with memory, you should:

- A. change client's schedule every day

- B. give a series of instruction at a time

- C. give brief, simple massages at a time

- D. speak in long sentences instead of short



INSERVICE CREDIT: **1 HOUR**

SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_