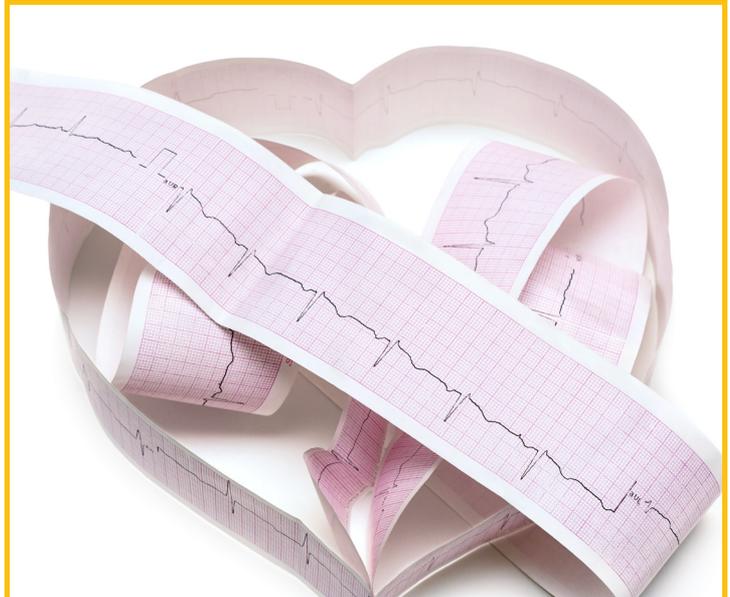


World Stroke Day



World Stroke Day takes place on the 29th of October this year. The day was established in 2006 by the World Stroke Organisation to help create awareness around the world's high stroke rate and prevalence. The most important aspects of the stroke campaign yearly are educating people on stroke warning signs and the importance of taking action immediately.

Stroke is the number four cause of death in the world, and one of the leading causes of disability. A stroke is when the blood vessels in the brain become restricted or burst, preventing blood and oxygen from reaching the affected part of the brain.

What causes a stroke?

Strokes can be caused by various factors and conditions, including:

- **High blood pressure.** This is one of the leading causes of stroke.
- **Diabetes, cholesterol, smoking.** Stroke is more common in people who have diabetes, who have uncontrolled high cholesterol, and who smoke.
- **Infections, conditions, and injuries.** People with TB, meningitis, HIV, and people who have sustained head injuries also have a higher risk of stroke.

Signs of a stroke

Signs of a stroke include sudden weakness, loss

of speech, confusion, loss of vision, headache, and dizziness. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa uses an acronym, FAST, to help people to remember the signs of a stroke and to call emergency services:

- **Face drooping.** To test for facial weakness, ask the person to smile and see if one side of the face droops or doesn't move as well as the other.
- **Arm weakness.** Ask the person to lift both arms and see if they can hold them both up.
- **Speech difficulty.** Ask them to repeat a short phrase like 'It's a sunny day in Cape Town' and see if they can repeat it without slurring.
- **Time to call emergency medical services.** Make note of when the symptoms started and be sure to call emergency services immediately.

Call 112 if using a cell phone, and 10177 from a landline.

Remember that time lost is brain function lost so getting the person to hospital immediately is imperative.