

Video: Physician warns that with a stroke, 'time equals brain'

August 4 2014, by Jim Ritter

Dr. José Biller, chair of Neurology and a stroke specialist, explains that both his parents died of vascular diseases, his father of a heart attack and his mother of a brain hemorrhage. He thinks this influenced his decision to enter the field of medicine.

Dr. Biller says that 800,000 strokes occur each year in the U.S. One third of those are [recurrent strokes](#) and the rest are new strokes. Most strokes, about 87 percent, are due to a blockage of the arteries to the brain and the rest occur because of ruptured blood vessels. Dr. Biller says [mini strokes](#), or transient ischemic strokes, often precede a larger stroke.

Unfortunately many strokes have no warning signs, but people who do experience symptoms should be evaluated by medical professionals immediately. Signs of a stroke can include:

- Trouble with speech
- Difficulty understanding speech
- Weakness in one half of body
- Asymmetry of the face (such as a drooping mouth)
- Visual problems Slurring of words
- Balance problems, vertigo, or dizziness
- Severe headache.
- Neurologists have a saying: Time equals brain. The more time without treatment, the more brain tissue that can be lost.

Dr. Biller emphasizes that stroke can affect someone of any age, even

babies developing in the womb.

Some things that can increase your risk for stroke are: [high blood pressure](#), [high cholesterol levels](#), diabetes, high blood sugar levels, heart arrhythmia, smoking, abuse of alcohol, obesity, sedentary life and sleep apnea.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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