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Tennis great, John Newcombe, speaks from experience about early signs of stroke

John Newcombe was relaxing with friends when he suddenly got a dizzy feeling in his head, "The early signs of stroke that I experienced were numbness in my right bottom lip, tip of my tongue and right hand. I probably had signs for over a day before I took myself to hospital." John realises how lucky he was though as his stroke wasn't as bad as Rod Laver's.

Many stroke survivors can look back and see that there were some early signs of stroke. The problem is that many Australians do not know what the signs of stroke are and if they did they may have been able to avoid a stroke or achieve a better recovery.

Stroke is Australia's third largest killer with 48,000 Australians having a stroke each year. Stroke can happen at any age and the majority of Australians know little about this devastating condition. The good news is that it is largely preventable. Because of this, the National Stroke Foundation has developed **strokesafe™**. **strokesafe™** will become one of Australia's most significant public health campaigns and aims to educate all Australians about the signs of stroke and how to be safe from stroke.

John Newcombe's recovery is inspirational and he is fortunate. "What I don't understand are people who return to their old habits after a stroke. It certainly got my attention, I may have another one, but I have not intention of helping it along." John said.

John realises now that his stroke was a result of high cholesterol and blood pressure. "I had a tendency to over indulge in bad habits, thinking that it can never happen to me. I certainly have a greater respect for my health and wellbeing now."

John Newcombe is teaming up with many stroke survivors around Australia in order to teach us all to "look out for the signs of stroke and live". The early signs of stroke include:

WEAKNESS or NUMBNESS: or paralysis of the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.

DIFFICULTY SPEAKING or understanding.

DIZZINESS, loss of balance or unexplained fall.

LOSS OF VISION: sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes.

HEADACHE: usually severe and of abrupt onset or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.

DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING.

The signs of stroke may occur alone or in combination. They can last a few seconds or up to 24 hours and then disappear. In its inaugural year, the theme to **strokesafe™** is "look out for the signs of stroke and live". If you experience any one of the signs, get medical attention immediately.

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strokesafe™ for life

strokesafe™ for life is an important health education program that aims to save 110,000 Australians from death and disability over the next 10 years. **strokesafe™** launches nationally on 19 September to coincide with National Stroke Week. The public will learn about **strokesafe™** through a significant TV, Radio and Print campaign from 20 September through until 31 October.

About the National Stroke Foundation

The National Stroke Foundation is a charity that has achieved an international reputation for excellence and its subsidiary, the National Stroke Research Institute, is acknowledged as one of the world's leading centres for research into stroke.

Stroke survivors available for interview

Mr John Newcombe is available for interview during Stroke Week 19 – 29 September 2004. There are many other stroke survivors with inspirational stories available for interviews.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL JO BURROWS, NATIONAL MARKETING MANAGER,
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