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Don't phone a friend – act FAST call 000

New research has found that more than half of people who have a stroke call a relative or friend first, rather than an ambulance, taking up valuable time that could improve their treatment and recovery from stroke – Australia's second biggest killer.

To save lives from stroke, the National Stroke Foundation is launching an awareness campaign in National Stroke Week to urge Australians to call 000 immediately if they experience the signs of stroke or if they see the signs in someone else.

The research, conducted by the National Stroke Research Institute also found that the majority of the people called for advice chose to travel to the stroke patient's home before an ambulance was called.

National Stroke Foundation CEO, Dr Erin Lalor, says that getting medical treatment immediately can make a huge difference to someone's recovery.

"We say that time lost is brain lost. Getting immediate treatment can be the difference between death or severe disability and making a good recovery after a stroke."

"But people don't always recognise when a stroke happens, or they feel the need to check first with a friend or relative."

"The campaign promotes a simple test for stroke that everybody should know. It's called the **FAST** test," she said.

FAST stands for **F**acial weakness, **A**rm weakness, **S**peech difficulty, **T**ime to act. Using the **FAST** test involves asking three simple questions:

- **F**ace – Can the person smile, has their mouth or eyes drooped?
- **A**rms – Can the person raise both arms?
- **S**peech – Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- **T**ime – Act **FAST** and **call 000 immediately**.

Stroke is the second single biggest killer in Australia – with one occurring approximately every 10 minutes.

The National Stroke Foundation says that it's important to get medical attention even if the signs only last for a short period.

For more information or for interviews, contact Nicola Edwards at the National Stroke Foundation on 03 9670 1000.