

# Heart & Stroke FAST Toolkit

Updated version: January 2022

Learn the  
signs of stroke

**F**ace is it drooping?

**A**rms can you raise both?

**S**peech is it slurred or jumbled?

**T**ime to call 9-1-1 right away.

Act **F A S T**. Lifesaving treatment  
begins the second you call 9-1-1.

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# 1. Introduction

## Beat stroke. Share FAST.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide tools and assets for use by Heart & Stroke partners and allies, to help you share and amplify the FAST signs of stroke during Stroke Month (June) and throughout the year. All shareable assets (graphics, videos, etc.) can be accessed through links through the Toolkit.

### With your help, we can achieve these goals to save more lives:

- Increase the number of people in Canada who recognize the signs of stroke and know to act fast by calling 9-1-1 or their local emergency number.
- Reduce the time between stroke onset and arrival in hospital emergency departments and increase the proportion of stroke patients who arrive at hospital by ambulance.

**Thank you for joining the effort to beat stroke!**



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## 2. Why an updated version of the FAST toolkit?

New assets were created to address the fact that many people are still hesitant to call 9-1-1 when they see the FAST signs of stroke, creating the potential for delays in lifesaving care.

The intent of these new assets is not only to continue to drive awareness of the most common signs of stroke, but also to reinforce the need to call 9-1-1 immediately when you see them. No one should ever second-guess themselves when deciding to make that lifesaving call and our new digital assets will allow us to drive this critical point home.

- **Development of FAST digital 15-sec. and 6-sec. assets**

We have developed new 15-sec. and 6-sec. digital assets to complement our total suite of existing FAST assets.

Both music / non music versions are available pending the channel you could use.

- **Updated core FAST assets**

The following core assets were updated to include the new Call to Action (CTA) developed for the digital assets that reinforces the importance of calling 9-1-1:

- The core FAST “lock-up” with each of the signs of stroke
- Signs of stroke poster

- **Assets from our Saskatchewan Pilot Project**

In addition to the new 15-sec. and 6-sec. assets, a pilot project, in collaboration with Bell Media/CTV in Saskatchewan and Stephanie Rusu, Director, Health Policy and Systems, was put in motion. It was developed to emphasize the need to call 9-1-1 resulting in the patient getting the right care, at the right place at the right time. From their collaboration a campaign of a 60-sec. and three 15-sec. was created.

Look for this symbol  to easily spot the new assets.

## 3. Background

### Stroke statistics

- There are an estimated 62,000 strokes in Canada each year. That is one stroke every 9 minutes.
- Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Canada, a leading cause of severe disability and the leading cause of hospitalization.
- Each year, more than 11,000 Canadians die of stroke.
- Stroke alone costs the Canadian economy \$3.6 billion a year in physician services, hospital costs, lost wages and decreased productivity.
- For every minute delay in treating a stroke, the average patient loses 1.9 million brain cells.
- Nine in 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease or stroke and 4 in 10 Canadians have 3 or more.

### FAST signs of stroke awareness campaign

- Heart & Stroke's awareness campaign is aimed at helping people recognize the signs of stroke and act FAST.
- FAST is an easy way to remember the most common signs of stroke.  
FAST stands for **F**ace – is it drooping? **A**rms – can you raise both? **S**peech – is it slurred or jumbled?  
And **T**ime – to call 9-1-1 right away.
- Do not drive to the hospital. An ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care.
- Stroke is a medical emergency, even during a pandemic. Recognizing the signs of stroke and acting quickly can mean the difference between life and death, or the difference between a full recovery and a lasting disability.

To learn more, visit [heartandstroke.ca/FAST](http://heartandstroke.ca/FAST).

To learn more about stroke, visit:

- [What is a stroke?](#)
- [Risk factors](#)

## 4. FAST assets for social media

### Help us share FAST video messaging on social media

Our FAST posts on social media will help people recognize the signs of stroke and act FAST. You can help by sharing the FAST message on your social channels.

Here's how:

- Right-click on this video link and save it to your desktop or mobile device:



- One of the [two digital assets](#) of 6 sec. or 15 sec.
  - One of the [three FAST animated format](#): 6, 10 or 15 sec.
  - FAST [30-sec. PSA](#): "Witness"
- Copy and paste the suggested social media posts below, or develop your own customized posts to share any of the FAST videos
  - Make sure to tag @heartandstroke.



### Suggested copy for Facebook or Instagram:

Headline

**Learn the signs. Act FAST.**

You can't reason with a stroke. The instant you recognize any of the signs, call 9-1-1. Do not drive to the hospital. An ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care. Learn the signs. Act FAST. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne [www.heartandstroke.ca/FAST](http://www.heartandstroke.ca/FAST)

When someone is having a stroke, every second counts. If you recognize any of the signs, call 9-1-1 immediately. An ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care. Don't wait, and don't drive to the hospital. Learn the signs. Act FAST. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne [www.heartandstroke.ca/FAST](http://www.heartandstroke.ca/FAST)



## Suggested copy for Twitter:

The instant you recognize any of the signs, call 9-1-1. Do not drive to the hospital. An ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care. Learn the signs. Act FAST. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne

Stroke is a medical emergency, even during a pandemic. If you recognize any signs of stroke, call 911 immediately. An ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne

FAST is a campaign designed to help you recognize the signs of #stroke so you can act quickly when every second counts. Learn the signs. Act FAST. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne

Would you know when someone is having a stroke? By knowing the FAST signs of #stroke and acting FAST, you could save the life of someone you love. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne

FAST is a simple way to remember how to check for the signs of stroke. And it can mean the difference between life and death. Learn the signs because every minute counts. #BeatStroke #HeartandStrokeBeatAsOne

## 5. FAST assets for digital and broadcast

### A. Digital video assets (Digital use only)

Two new digital assets were developed to emphasize the importance of calling 9-1-1 and not drive to the hospital.

We encourage you to use these new assets when sharing FAST on your social channels (see section above for suggested copy).



#### Version without music

- 15 seconds
- 6 seconds

#### Version with music

- 15 seconds
- 6 seconds

**NOTE:** For a paid social or digital campaign, please contact Cindy Lithwick at [Cindy.Lithwick@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:Cindy.Lithwick@heartandstroke.ca) to get the appropriate formats.

### B. Digital versions of the FAST image (Digital use only)

Use one of the following of [animated versions](#) of the FAST image to increase recall of the signs of stroke

- FAST 6-sec animated version
- FAST 10-sec animated version
- FAST 15-sec animated version

### C. Saskatchewan pilot project video vignettes (Broadcast & Digital use)

A pilot project in Saskatchewan was developed in collaboration with Bell Media/CTV resulting in the production of four FAST vignettes:



- [60-sec vignette](#) (main story - Ruth)
- [15-sec. vignette](#) (Signs)
- [15-sec. vignette](#) (Think)
- [15-sec. vignette](#) (Long term)

**NOTE:** Please contact Stephanie Rusu, director, health policy and systems, Saskatchewan at [Stephanie.Rusu@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:Stephanie.Rusu@heartandstroke.ca) for any broadcast use of the vignettes.

## D. The 30-second PSA video (Broadcast & Digital use)

This asset can be used to show a witness point of view when someone is having a stroke.

- [30-sec Witness PSA](#)

**NOTE:** For a TV campaign, please contact Cindy Lithwick at [Cindy.Lithwick@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:Cindy.Lithwick@heartandstroke.ca) to get the appropriate format and Think TV number.

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## 6. Other FAST Assets

Consider using the FAST image below in your newsletters, presentations, emails, websites, and blogs. A printable PDF poster is also available for offices, community centres, places of worship and other public spaces.

### Updated FAST core mnemonic



We have updated the FAST Mnemonic with a new “Call-to-Action” to emphasize the importance of calling 9-1-1 while mentioning the immediate benefits of being treated early in the stroke care continuum.

- [FAST image](#)
- [FAST poster](#) (11" x 17")

## Learn the signs of stroke

**F**ace is it drooping?  
**A**rms can you raise both?  
**S**peech is it slurred or jumbled?  
**T**ime to call 9-1-1 right away.

Act **F A S T**. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1.

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### For rural and remote areas



A version including “call 9-1-1 or your emergency services” exists as well for rural and remote areas where the 9-1-1 service might not be available.

- [FAST image](#)

## Learn the signs of stroke

**F**ace is it drooping?  
**A**rms can you raise both?  
**S**peech is it slurred or jumbled?  
**T**ime to call 9-1-1 right away or your local emergency number.

Act **F A S T**. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.

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## 7. FAST Consumer Articles

Try one of our pre-formatted feature articles that you can circulate to your community, such as in a newsletter or intranet.

Simply copy paste one of the consumer articles below for your use.

1. Learn the signs of stroke (156 words)
2. With stroke, minutes count (308 words)

### Learn the signs of stroke

You could save the life of someone you love.



## Learn the signs of stroke

- F**ace is it drooping?
- A**rms can you raise both?
- S**peech is it slurred or jumbled?
- T**ime to call 9-1-1 right away.

Act **F A S T**. Lifesaving treatment begins the second you call 9-1-1.

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If you or someone with you experiences any of these signs, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.

Stroke is a medical emergency. Acting quickly can improve your chances of survival and recovery.

Don't drive yourself or the person having a stroke to the hospital – an ambulance will get you to the best hospital for stroke care.

Treatments can reduce the severity of a stroke and reverse some of its effects, but only if they are given as quickly as possible.

### Everyone needs to know the signs of stroke.

You never know when you, a parent, a spouse, or a friend, might experience the signs of stroke and it will be up to you to act. There are still too many Canadians who don't recognize the signs, nor know what to do when they see them.

Share the signs of stroke and help save lives. For more information visit [heartandstroke.ca/FAST](https://heartandstroke.ca/FAST).

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## With stroke, minutes count

Acting quickly can improve the chances of survival.

Time is everything during a stroke. In fact, there is a saying that “time lost is brain lost.”

Stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is cut off. Brain cells die at a rate of 1.9 million per minute after a stroke, so the sooner blood flow can be restored, the better the chance of survival – with little or no disability.

It is important for Canadians to learn the signs of stroke and know what to do.

FAST is an easy and memorable way to remember the major signs of stroke:



- **F**ace – is it drooping?
- **A**rms – can you raise them?
- **S**peech – is it slurred or jumbled?
- **T**ime – to call 9-1-1 right away.

If you or someone with you experiences any of these signs, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number and tell them you are having or witnessing a stroke. Arriving by ambulance means you will get to the right hospital faster – one that is equipped to provide emergency stroke care.

Not all hospitals have the capacity to administer clot busting drugs, which can stop the effects of stroke. The emergency medical services will be able to determine which hospital in your area can best help.

## Learn the signs of stroke



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## More signs of stroke

The FAST signs are the most common signs of stroke and are more likely to be caused by stroke than any other condition.

There are some additional signs of stroke that are less common. They include:

- vision changes - blurred or double vision
- sudden severe headache - usually accompanied by some of the other signs
- numbness - usually on one side of the body
- problems with balance

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Canada and a leading cause of disability. There are an estimated 62,000 strokes in Canada each year. That is one stroke every nine minutes.

For more information visit [heartandstroke.ca/FAST](http://heartandstroke.ca/FAST).

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