



**Friday, 17 April 2020**

## **THINK F.A.S.T., ACT FAST AND KEEP LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER**

Through a national campaign, the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand is reminding New Zealanders to 'think F.A.S.T. and act fast' during the coronavirus pandemic, to ensure people recognise the signs of a stroke and act immediately in order to save lives. Those who may be having a stroke must still call 111 for emergency medical care, even during these challenging times.

### **Recognising the signs of stroke**

The national charity is highlighting the important acronym F.A.S.T. to remember the different signs of stroke.

- **F...Face...**Is their/your face drooping on one side?
- **A...Arm...**Is one arm weak?
- **S...Speech...**Is it mixed up, slurred or lost?
- **T...Take Action...**Stroke is always an emergency. Call 111 immediately.

Think F.A.S.T...act fast...and keep looking out for each other.

Dr. John Fink, Consultant Neurologist at Christchurch Hospital explained: "There is concern that many New Zealanders don't want to be a burden on the health system and so are not seeking urgent medical attention when they need it most. When someone is showing signs of having a stroke, the best thing to do is act fast and call 111. We are open for business. Getting access to stroke treatment can help save lives."

To remind people of the important F.A.S.T. messaging, the Stroke Foundation's campaign will launch next week with advertisements running across mainstream media.

Mark Vivian, Stroke Foundation CEO said, "we know that many New Zealanders will continue to be affected by stroke during this time and it's important that we remind people of the signs to look out for if they or someone in their bubble are experiencing a stroke. If any of the signs of stroke are recognised, don't wait, call 111 straight away. The sooner they reach hospital, the greater the chance of recovery."

While New Zealanders have been in lockdown during the past three weeks, St John recorded 687 stroke-related 111 calls.

One New Zealander every hour experiences a stroke. The campaign aims to familiarise Kiwis with the signs and symptoms of stroke and encourage them to continue to seek urgent medical care.

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**About the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand**

The Stroke Foundation is the only national charity in New Zealand focused on the prevention of and recovery from stroke. For 40 years we have actively promoted ways to avoid stroke and dedicated ourselves to working closely with stroke survivors across the country. The generosity of New Zealanders enables us to help thousands of stroke survivors every year; providing them with critical services to ensure the best possible outcomes - not just for themselves, but also their family/whānau and carers too. Three quarters of strokes are preventable, so we will continue our vital awareness campaigns and health promotion programmes - saving thousands of lives. To find out more about the important work the Stroke Foundation does go to [www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz).