

**May 31, 2005**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KNOW THE SIGNS OF STROKE.**

**London, ON** - Dr. Sharon Baker's mission is to bring stroke awareness to the forefront of public knowledge. Her medical experience sends a strong message that a stroke can happen to anyone at any age -- and especially to women.

"Stroke is a medical emergency! Call 911 immediately if you experience the symptoms of stroke. A delay in seeking medical treatment can worsen the complications of a stroke," she explains.

A stroke is usually marked by a sudden onset of symptoms including: sudden numbness; weakness or tingling in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden loss of speech or trouble understanding; sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes; trouble walking; dizziness, loss of coordination or balance; and sudden, severe headache.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen to the brain either bursts or becomes blocked by a clot. When part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, it begins to die. Early medical intervention may limit the devastating effects of stroke.

"Don't wait to see if your symptoms go away, or for someone to come home to drive you to the hospital," stresses Dr. Baker. "In this situation, time is brain."

Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death in Canada. Each year, about 16,000 Canadians die from stroke. Each year, more women than men die from stroke.

Although some risk factors cannot be controlled, other risk factors, such as high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, high cholesterol and physical inactivity can be addressed by making lifestyle changes and through medical treatment.

For more information about reducing your risk of having a stroke, visit the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca) or the website of the Southwestern Ontario Stroke Strategy at [www.lhsc.on.ca/rss](http://www.lhsc.on.ca/rss)

**For more information:**

Sharon Mytka  
Regional Stroke Prevention Coordinator  
(519) 685-8500 Ext. 32264  
[sharon.mytka@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:sharon.mytka@lhsc.on.ca)