

## Recognizing a Stroke

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall. She assured everyone that she was fine and had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. They cleaned up and gave her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the afternoon. Ingrid's husband called later that his wife had been taken to the hospital that evening and had died there. She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke perhaps Ingrid would still be with us today?

A neurologist said that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours, he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke. The trick is recognising a stroke because sometimes the symptoms are difficult to identify. After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness,

arm weakness and speech problems, researchers at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last February urged the general public to learn the following three questions:

- 1) Ask him/her to SMILE.
- 2) Ask him/her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.
- 3) Ask him/her to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE coherently e.g. It is sunny out today

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call a 999 ambulance immediately and describe the symptoms. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and so prevent brain damage.