

STROKE: FROM ONSET TO TREATMENT, TIME IS CRITICAL

No one knows the importance of rapid, specialized treatment for stroke better than Kurt Straub, a 53-year-old electrical engineer and a recent stroke patient.

In the fall of 2013, Straub was sitting at his desk around noon and began to feel light-headed and dizzy. Not wanting to admit anything was seriously wrong, he put his head down on his desk to rest. The next thing he remembers is being on the floor after falling out of his chair. His co-worker quickly came to his aid and noticed his face was drooping and he wasn't speaking properly. In a few moments, 911 was called and

Auburn Hills emergency medical services (EMS) arrived at the scene. After evaluating Straub, the EMS technicians radioed the St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Emergency Department that they had a priority one stroke patient and requested that the stroke team be activated.

The stroke team was mobilized right away, according to Rahul Mehta, MD, Associate Medical Director of the Emergency Department. Straub arrived showing common symptoms of stroke—sensory, cognitive and physical deficits, including slurred speech, facial droop, and arm and leg weakness on the left side.



After having a stroke, Kurt Straub has returned to work, thanks to the rapid and specialized treatment by the St. Joseph Mercy Oakland stroke team.

"When a priority stroke patient arrives, several departments are on standby, ready and waiting to begin the timely and seamless care needed to treat a stroke," says Dr. Mehta. "Upon arrival, Straub immediately received a CT scan of the brain; it was read promptly by a stroke specialist and was negative for a hemorrhage."





According to Aniel Majjhoo, MD, a vascular and interventional specialist at St. Joe, Straub was diagnosed with a right dissection, or torn carotid artery, in the neck, which caused a clot to break away and block an artery in the brain, triggering the stroke.

Simultaneously, the Pharmacy Department prepared tPA, a clot-busting medication, to be administered quickly to break the clot apart and restore blood flow to the brain.

From the time that Straub arrived at the Emergency Department to the time tPA was administered was 18 minutes. This is less than one-third the national average of 60 minutes, which is the standard for treatment of a stroke using this medication for it to be effective and lifesaving. Within the first couple of hours, Straub showed neurological improvement and was released home within a couple of days on medication only.

"We have followed up with an angiogram to monitor his progress," says Dr. Majjhoo, "and he is back to his normal clinical baseline and recently returned to work."

Today, Straub wants people to be aware of the signs of stroke and to understand that stroke doesn't just happen to older people—it can happen to anybody. Every minute counts: The sooner clot-busting medication is administered, the better the chance of not having permanent damage from a stroke.

	FACE	Does one side of the face droop? Ask the person to smile.
	ARMS	Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
	SPEECH	Is speech slurred? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the sentence repeated correctly?
	TIME	If the person shows any of these symptoms, Call 911 and get to the hospital immediately.