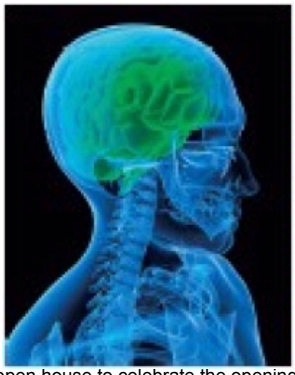
Eisenhower Opens New Neurological Care Unit



On July 29, 2009, the Eisenhower Neuroscience Institute held an open house to celebrate the opening of the hospital's new Neurological Care Unit. The event was well attended by community members, staff and physicians, and featured free stroke risk assessments, opportunities to meet physicians and therapists, and refreshments.

The Neurological Care Unit is located on Three North and provides care for individuals who have just had a stroke, in addition to other neurological patients. According to Sue Effinger, RN, MSN, MHA, Clinical Director of Eisenhower's Neurological Care Unit, there are medically-proven benefits to having a unit and medical team dedicated to the care of acute stroke patients.

"Studies have shown that when stroke patients are treated in a setting dedicated specifically to their needs, we have better patient outcomes," Effinger explains."Mortality rates improve, and hospital stays are shorter."

Effinger says that at Eisenhower, the stroke team is staffed by a multidisciplinary group that works collaboratively to ensure that stroke patients get the best possible care. There are several stroke certified neurologists on staff who deal specifically with stroke, and neurosurgeons with extensive experience with hemorrhagic stroke care and treatment. Eisenhower Medical Center also has the Coachella Valley's only neurointerventional radiologists, who can treat patients with advanced neuroradiological procedures. There is an ongoing program to educate the unit's staff about the latest protocols for treating stroke, including monthly grand rounds where the different disciplines come together.

The Eisenhower neurological team also places a great emphasis on informing the community about stroke. The goal is to educate Valley residents about the warning signs of stroke, and get the message out that if you act quickly, and treat patients at the first signs of a stroke, patient outcomes can be dramatically improved.

In 2010, the Neurological Care Unit will move to the new Walter and Leonore Annenberg Pavilion, where the entire second floor will be dedicated to neurological conditions and treatment, including a new neuro-intensive care unit.

Eisenhower Medical Center's program for stroke care has been consistently recognized for its excellence. Last year Eisenhower was designated as a Certified Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission for Primary Stroke Centers. Eisenhower is the first hospital in Riverside and San Bernardino counties to earn the organization's Gold Seal of Approval™, its highest level of certification.

Eisenhower received the Joint Commission's designation soon after being awarded the prestigious HealthGrades Stroke Care Excellence Award™, which is given to the top ten percent of hospitals in the United States that specialize in stroke. Eisenhower has received that honor from HealthGrades for the past three years, and has been Five-Star Rated for the Treatment of Stroke by HealthGrades for five years in a row (2005 through 2009).

Stroke is the nation's number three killer (behind heart disease and cancer) and is the world's number one cause of physical disability. A stroke interrupts blood flow to the brain.When a stroke occurs cells are deprived of oxygen and can begin to die within minutes, often leading to permanent damage and disability. Treating stroke quickly, and restoring blood flow to the brain, is critical to recovery.

STROKE SYMPTOMS

- Sudden one-sided weakness, numbness or paralysis
- Sudden blurred or decreased vision
- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or trouble walking
- Sudden severe or unexplained headache.

Anyone experiencing these symptoms should call 911 immediately.

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