

## Every Minute Matters With Clot-Busting Stroke Drug: Study

Every 60 seconds shaved off how quickly tPA was given meant patient had one less day of disability



THURSDAY, March 13, 2014 (HealthDay News) -- Every 15-minute delay in receiving a clot-busting drug means stroke survivors will have about one month less of a disability-free life, while every minute sooner that they receive the drug translates into more than one extra day of healthy life.

That's the finding of a study that examined the use of tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) in treating ischemic strokes, which occur when a blood clot blocks blood flow to the brain.

Guidelines say the drug should be given within four and a half hours after stroke symptoms begin, but this study shows that the earlier patients receive the drug within that window, the better.

Researchers applied the findings from major clot-busting drug trials to more than 2,200 stroke survivors in Australia and Finland to determine what their outcomes would have been, depending on when they were given tPA.

For every minute earlier that they received the drug, patients gained an average of nearly two more days of healthy life. Faster treatment helped all patients, but younger ones seemed to get slightly more benefit than older ones, according to the study, which was published in the March 13 issue of the journal *Stroke*. "Save a minute, save a day' is the message from our study, which examined how even small reductions in treatment delays might benefit patients measurably in the long run," study author Dr. Atte Meretoja, an associate professor of neurology at the University of Melbourne, in Australia, said in a journal news release.

People who develop stroke symptoms, such as arm weakness, speech problems or face droop, should call for help immediately, the researchers said.

"Clot-busting treatment works equally well, irrespective of race, ethnicity or gender," Meretoja said. "Speedy restoration of blood flow to the brain is crucial for brain cell survival everywhere."

### More information

The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has more about [stroke](#).

SOURCE: *Stroke*, news release, March 13, 2014

-- [Robert Preidt](#)

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