

healthy heart

HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION



Know the signs of a stroke

Symptoms of a stroke may be sudden. They include:

- Weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Confusion, or difficulty speaking or understanding.
- Problems with vision, such as dimness or loss of vision.
- Dizziness, or problems with balance or coordination.
- Problems with movement or walking.
- Severe headaches with no other known cause.

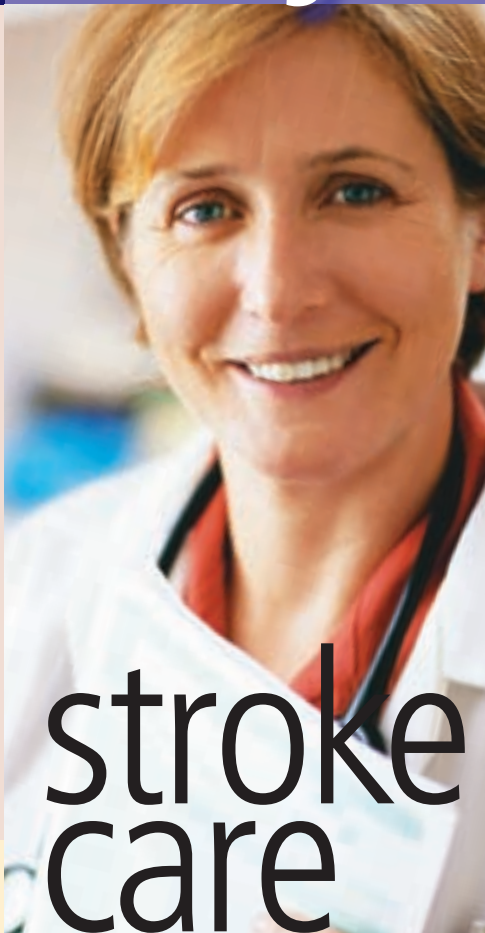
If you experience any of these warning signs or recognize them in someone else, get help immediately. Every second counts.

Bringing our health screenings to you

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital is pleased to provide mobile stroke and aneurysm screenings as a community service to civic groups, clubs and other organizations.

These noninvasive and painless health screenings check for carotid artery disease (a major cause of stroke) and abdominal aortic aneurysms (a dangerous weakening and enlargement of the aorta that can have serious health implications).

Groups interested in sponsoring a screening should contact Thomas Lennon at (732) 937-8718.



stroke care

RWJUH RECEIVES GOLD SEAL OF APPROVAL

IN A MOVE ACKNOWLEDGING the exceptionally high quality of stroke care at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, the nation's major hospital accrediting agency has certified RWJUH as a Primary Stroke Center and awarded the hospital's stroke program its Gold Seal of Approval.

RWJUH is the first hospital in central New Jersey to earn this important distinction from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

"Our state-of-the-art protocols and 24-hour stroke team capability translate into better outcomes for patients with stroke," says Clifton R. Lacy, M.D., RWJUH president and CEO.

Dangers of stroke

Stroke is the third most common cause of death in New Jersey, taking the lives of about 4,000 people each year. It is also a leading cause of long-term disability.

High standards

To earn certification as a Primary Stroke Center, RWJUH demonstrated adherence to the most stringent national standards and guidelines for stroke care.

Top-rated

The Primary Stroke Center certification marks another achievement and reinforces its status as one of the region's leading hospitals.

In 2005, *Consumers Digest* ranked RWJUH among the top five hospitals in the nation for patient safety. RWJUH also had more top-rated physicians than any hospital in New Jersey listed in *New York* magazine and *New Jersey Monthly's* 2005 "Best Doctors" issues.

Go to www.rwjuh.edu /listen to hear about advances in stroke care at RWJUH.



See heart surgery on the Internet

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital recently demonstrated its leadership in cardiac care and technology by broadcasting—live over the Internet—a breakthrough type of heart surgery. This procedure allows many heart patients to recover more quickly and avoids open-heart surgery.

The surgery can be viewed any time by visiting www.rwjuh.edu/webcast.



The broadcast, featuring the hospital's world-recognized cardiac team, is the sixth the medical center has done. Such broadcasts help people realize that the medical advances in use at RWJUH can make a vast difference in their lives.

Mark B. Anderson, M.D., chief of cardiac surgery at the medical center, performed the minimally invasive surgery using specialized surgical tools. He reached the heart through small incisions in the chest and repaired an atrial septal defect, an opening in one of the walls of the heart that causes abnormal blood flow through the heart.

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speeding HEARTS

SOME THINGS ARE JUST better when there's a rhythm to them. But sometimes life's rhythms can go out of phase.

Even that metronome in your chest can lose the beat.

An abnormal heartbeat is called an arrhythmia. The most common type of arrhythmia is atrial fibrillation.

The disorder occurs when the electrical impulses that control the heart's beating become erratic. The heart beats irregularly—often too fast and with not enough force.

Unless it's treated, an overactive heart can weaken. Blood backs up, and the risk goes up for blood clots, which can lead to a stroke. Untreated atrial fibrillation also can lead to chronic fatigue and congestive heart failure.

Most instances of irregular heart rhythm can be cured without surgery. Some medications can help control heart rhythm. Other treatments may include catheter ablation, a minimally invasive procedure typically performed in a hospital catheterization lab.

Now, people with irregular heartbeats also can be cured at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital through minimally invasive surgery that dramatically speeds recovery time and spares the trauma of open-heart surgery. RWJUH is one of a select few medical centers in



Listen to RWJUH heart surgeon Peter Scholz, M.D., discuss minimally invasive surgery for irregular heartbeat at [www.rwjuh.edu /listen](http://www.rwjuh.edu/listen).

the nation performing minimally invasive surgery for atrial fibrillation.

Some people with atrial fibrillation don't have any symptoms. But you should see your doctor if you notice possible signs, including shortness of breath or dizziness, an irregular heartbeat, palpitations or a thumping, "flopping" feeling in your chest.

avoid stroke

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

EVERY 45 SECONDS, SOMEONE in this country has a stroke—and you want to do everything possible to avoid joining that group.

So follow these tips to reduce your risk:

- Have your blood pressure checked regularly and keep it in a healthy range. High blood pressure is the most powerful risk factor for stroke. If your blood pressure is high, make the lifestyle changes your doctor suggests (such as reducing the salt in your diet) and take any blood pressure medicines as prescribed.

For stroke information and resources, call (732) 418-8110.

- Don't smoke. Smoking can help pave the way for a buildup of fatty substances in neck arteries that carry blood to your brain, and this buildup is a major cause of strokes. If you smoke, ask your doctor for help quitting.

- If you have diabetes, work with your doctor to manage your disease. Keeping blood sugar under control can help reduce your stroke risk.

- Make habits healthy. Aim for a low-fat, produce-rich diet, and eat sugary or salty foods sparingly. Also make time for regular exercise, remembering to start slowly and to check first with your doctor for an OK to be active. Habits like these



Gardening, walking and other activities can lower your risk of stroke.

Dangerous link: Atrial fibrillation and stroke

If you have atrial fibrillation, you are especially vulnerable to strokes.

Because of your condition, your heart's upper chambers quiver rather than beat effectively. As a result, blood in your heart can pool and clot. And if a clot travels to the brain, it can cause a stroke.

Treatment with the blood-thinning drug warfarin, however, can help keep clots from forming and can reduce your risk of a stroke, but this

agent can carry a small risk for excessive bleeding. Periodic blood tests may be needed to adjust dosage.

Patients have a variety of treatment options for controlling and curing atrial fibrillation. Consult your doctor.

To find a doctor affiliated with RWJUH who specializes in heart rhythm disturbances, call the hospital's Physician Referral Line at 1-888-44-RWJUH (447-9584).



help head off strokes by keeping your cholesterol levels, blood pressure and weight under control.

- Talk to your doctor about taking low doses of aspirin if you're older than 50. Aspirin can help prevent blood clots that trigger strokes.

- Don't shrug off a transient ischemic attack. These "warning

strokes" have strokelike symptoms but no lasting damage. Signs include sudden numbness or weakness (especially on one side of the body), slurred speech, blurred vision and stumbling. Treatment can lower the risk of a full-blown stroke.

Sources: American Stroke Association; National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke



HEALTHY. recipe

Stuffed peppers

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium zucchini, diced
- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- ½ cup grated low-fat cheddar cheese
- 4 large green bell peppers
- 2 cups no-salt-added tomato juice

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Rinse peppers, cut off tops and remove seeds. Save the tops.
3. Put oil in a large skillet and heat over medium heat. Then sauté the onions, garlic, zucchini and tomatoes until the zucchini is tender-crisp.
4. In a bowl, combine rice and cheese. Add to mixture in skillet and gently mix.
5. Put tomato juice in a casserole dish.
6. Stuff peppers with rice mixture and replace the pepper tops.
7. Put peppers in the casserole dish and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Makes four servings.

Nutrition facts (per serving)

Calories 294	Calories from fat 86
Percent Daily Value*	
Total fat 9.5g	7%
Cholesterol 3mg	1%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Carbohydrate 46g	7%
Protein 10g	
Percent of calories from fat 29	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.
Source: American Heart Association

THE Gift of life

TEAMING UP FOR BABY JORDAN

FIVE-MONTH-OLD JORDAN

Williams was born with a full head of hair and a life-threatening hole in her heart. She still has the halo of curly hair, but her heart defect is cured—thanks to the children's hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital.

"Jordan is doing great," her mother, Wendy Williams, said before the two returned to their home in Grenada, an island in the West Indies.

Jordan's journey

Jordan was brought to New Jersey through the Rotary Club of New Brunswick's Gift of Life program, which brings children to the United States for lifesaving heart care unavailable in their home counties.

The Rotary Club of New Brunswick once relied on hospitals in New York and Philadelphia for world-class pediatric heart care. Now they look no further than the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at RWJUH.

The pediatric heart program at RWJUH's acclaimed children's hospital is under the clinical leadership of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and renowned physicians listed in *America's Top Doctors* and *Top Doctors: New York Metro Area*, published by Castle Connolly.



Five-month-old heart surgery patient Jordan Williams is "doing great," says her mother, Wendy.

Donations

While the Rotary Club paid for the travel and living expenses, the cost of medical care was donated by RWJUH and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

You can help

People who would like to make a donation to support the hospital and programs such as these can call the RWJUH Foundation at **(732) 937-8750**. To make a secure online donation, visit the foundation's Web site at www.rwjufdn.org.

For information about the children's heart program, call **(732) 235-7905**.