

Stroke & COVID-19 Fact Sheet

- The American Heart Association has guidance on acute stroke treatment in the era of COVID-19. Key takeaways are:
 - Stroke is still an emergency, and time is still brain. Thrombolysis and thrombectomy still work.
 - Treat COVID+ or PUI stroke patients with alteplase whenever possible.
 - With respect to time targets for acute stroke care, don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Treat as many patients as you're able, as best you can.
 - Post-alteplase, ICU monitoring for 24 hours is ideal but is not evidence-based. It may be feasible to care for post-alteplase patients in an appropriate step-down unit if and ICU bed is not available. Alteplase should not be withheld due to unavailability of an ICU bed.
 - Full text link:
https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/STROKEAHA.120.030023?utm_campaign=ahajournals&utm_source=phd&utm_medium=link&utm_content=phd04-02-20_stroke-strokecenterscovid19
- Neurologists should minimize risk exposure by keeping stroke teams small and using telemedicine when able, including but not limited to the VA National Telestroke Program.
- Emergent CT scans are indicated for time-sensitive emergency conditions such as stroke and should be obtained as quickly as possible, using dedicated pathways for COVID+/PUI patients within the facility. <https://pubs.rsna.org/doi/10.1148/radiol.2020201326>
- Early estimates suggest 5% of hospitalized COVID+ patients will have stroke. <https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/specialtycare/Neurology/Telestroke/COVID-19/COVID-19%20and%20Stroke/COVID-19%20Neurological%20Manifestations%20-%20Wuhan%20Case%20Series%20Preprint.pdf>
- Severe strokes due to large vessel occlusion are being seen in young COVID+ patients often without the expected constellation of risk factors typically seen in stroke patients. <https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/specialtycare/Neurology/Telestroke/COVID-19/COVID-19%20and%20Stroke/COVID%20Young%20Strokes%20NYC%20Series%20-%20NEJM.pdf>
- Experience indicates that stroke activations for minor stroke have decreased recently. Although the reason is not entirely clear, there is concern that patients with stroke may be staying home instead of coming for evaluation of their stroke symptoms. Patients should be reminded to call 911 if they suspect stroke. <https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/specialtycare/Neurology/Telestroke/COVID-19/COVID19%20and%20Stroke/Baffling%20Case%20of%20IS%20Disappearance%20in%20the%20COVID%20Era.Italy.pdf>