

# How to Correctly Diagnose These Strange Cerebellar Stroke Symptoms

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Cerebellar stroke symptoms are much different than the “usual” stroke symptoms, which often leads to misdiagnosis. And misdiagnosis, in turn, leads to **high death rates** and **high disability** among cerebellar stroke survivors.

This is a huge problem, which brings up a lot of questions like:

- *Why is cerebellar stroke so hard to diagnose?*
- *What are the symptoms?*
- *How can we improve the outcomes?*

This article will answer all those questions and more.

Let's get started.

# How Stroke Is Typically Diagnosed

Most strokes are identifiable using the F.A.S.T. test, which is an acronym that stands for:

- F – if half of their **F**ace is drooping, it could be a stroke
- A – if one **A**rm is weak or paralyzed, it could be a stroke
- S – if their **S**peech is slurring, it could be a stroke
- T – if they exude these symptoms, **T**ime is of the essence because brain cells are dying!

A stroke means that the supply of blood to the brain has been compromised and brain cells are dying. Therefore, time is brain! If anyone has these symptoms, they should be rushed to the emergency room as soon as possible.

**Cerebellar strokes, however, often do not result in *any* of those symptoms, making them hard to recognize.**

## Strange Cerebellar Stroke Symptoms

Cerebellar strokes account for less than 2% of all strokes, and they cause much different symptoms.

Signs and symptoms of cerebellar stroke ([www.http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/45/4/e.56](http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/45/4/e.56)) include:

- **Vertigo\***
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Lethargy
- Headache
- Muscle weakness or paralysis
- Vision problems (like blindness)

\*Vertigo is a huge one. About 3% of people rushed to the emergency room for vertigo are actually having a cerebellar stroke! **But because cerebellar stroke is hard to recognize, a lot of time is wasted while doctors perform various tests.** And some tests, like the CT scan, can be misleading, which wastes even more time.

## The Problem with CT Scans

A CT scan is usually ordered whenever a patient exudes strange symptoms so that doctors can get a look at what's going on inside the body. Although the intentions are good, CT scans do not help doctors diagnose cerebellar strokes because they have low sensitivity for strokes happening in the back of the brain where the cerebellum is located.

For example, the 80-year-old woman in [this study](#) needed **3 different CT scans over the course of 2 days before doctors were able to identify her cerebellar stroke.** Meanwhile, lots of brain cells were dying and she was deteriorating rapidly.

This is why cerebellar stroke has high death and disability rates.

# Raising Awareness for Cerebellar Stroke Symptoms

The challenge of correctly diagnosing rare diseases is difficult for doctors because, when a patient exudes strange symptoms, the possibilities are practically endless. So we're trying to raise awareness of cerebellar stroke:

## **Not all strokes can be diagnosed the same!**

While the F.A.S.T. test helps quickly diagnose most strokes, it leaves the rare cerebellar stroke in the shadows. So, what can be done to fix the problem?

## Correctly Diagnosing Cerebellar Stroke with DW-MRI Scans

While CT scans make it difficult to identify a cerebellar stroke, **diffusion-weighted magnetic resonance imaging** (DW-MRI) do a much better job. Therefore, doctors should be encouraged to perform DW-MRI's whenever anyone exudes the symptoms of cerebellar stroke.

You can help spread awareness by educating your beloved friends and family of the symptoms of cerebellar stroke.

We made our own acronym to help: **S.A.V.E.**

- S – If they are extremely **Sick** and nauseous, it could be a cerebellar stroke
- A – if they have difficulty lifting one **Arm**, it could be a cerebellar stroke
- V – if they have intense **Vertigo** or **Vomiting**, it could be a cerebellar stroke
- E – if their **Eyesight** is deteriorating rapidly, it could be a cerebellar stroke

And if someone is having a cerebellar stroke, rush them to the emergency room and **demand a DW-MRI – not a CT scan.**

The sooner treatment is administered, the more brain is saved, which leads to less disability. Swift diagnosis and action can help save a life and improve the outcome after cerebellar stroke.