

MINISTROKES

Physicians call them transient ischemic attacks or TIAs, but make no mistake, these ministrokes can be deadly. What's worse, many people who suffer attacks rarely seek medical help. Director of UAV's comprehensive stroke centre, doctor Andrey Alexandrov: "Ministrokes, or TIAs, **tend to resolve on its own, usually within minutes**, and because **symptoms resolve relatively fast**, patients tend not to call 911. And that's the problem.

A devastating problem considering a general study found TIAs often precede a major stroke. "10% of these patients, full 10%, will have a major stroke within 3 months from the TIA, and half of these strokes occur within the first two days. There's no time to wait. The most **critical time after noticing that you may have a stroke is 1 hour**. That hour determines what will happen to you later on."

If you get to a hospital within an hour of the onset of symptoms, clot-busting drugs can reverse the neurological damage. Surgeons can also perform catheter procedures on some patients to remove clots from brain vessels. "UAV does more procedures than any hospital in Alabama."

UAV is one of the few hospitals staffed 24/7 with an emergency stroke team to offer a range of comprehensive services. Many people don't have a TIA before a stroke, so in essence, you are fortunate to have one, giving doctors a chance to intervene. A TIA occurs when blood flow to a part of the brain **is temporarily blocked**. Symptoms include weakness or numbness on one side of the body, inability to speak clearly or see. The symptoms last a few minutes to many hours.

"**Stroke does not receive recognition it deserves because there is no pain**. Since there is no pain, people are not complaining as much as they would complain about chest pain." Doctor Alexandrov says the exception – bleeding to the coverings of the brain. In that case, you would be likely to experience sudden unexplained headache.