

Best of Health



**HEALTHIEST PEOPLE
HEALTHIEST COMMUNITIES
EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE**



Brenda Kwiatkowski (L) and Ronald Pellegrini talk about Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIA) and lifestyle changes that can help to reduce the likelihood of a stroke.

Stroke Prevention Clinic Saves Lives

Ron Pellegrini visited the Royal University Hospital Emergency Department (ED) after feeling off-balance for more than 24 hours in May 2008.

"ED staff suspected I was having a stroke, and they didn't fool around," says Pellegrini. He received several diagnostic tests that day and was referred to the Stroke Prevention Clinic (SPC) at RUH.

"It turned out that I had a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) - a kind of mini-stroke that can be a warning sign of a more severe stroke," Pellegrini says. Dr. Christopher Voll, the clinic's medical director ordered additional testing following his assessment and prescribed medications to help prevent a debilitating stroke.

Pellegrini believes that patients have a responsibility to do everything possible to look after themselves. "As a patient, you have a job to do," he says. "You are a member of your care team, and you have to participate in your own care and recovery."

That's where Brenda Kwiatkowski, Clinical Nurse Coordinator, comes in. She has expertise in managing care for TIA and acute stroke patients, and met with Pellegrini to provide

information to prevent or reduce the threat of future stroke.

Pellegrini says that he is still here because of the staff in the RUH ED and the SPC. And that's exactly what the SPC wants to hear. The clinic provides a continuum of care for patients with symptoms of TIA or mild stroke, from diagnosis to treatment to education and follow-up for managing stroke risk factors.

One of the reasons the clinic works so well is the collaboration with other departments, including Medical Imaging, Non-Invasive Cardiology and Laboratory Services, which provide rapid access to investigations. Rapid assessment and intervention are proven to reduce stroke risk in TIA patients by as much as 80 percent.

Since it opened in January 2008, the clinic has seen 358 patients. Of those, 129 were diagnosed with TIA, and 93 with a mild stroke. Evidence indicates that as many as 25 percent of those diagnosed with TIA would go on to stroke within 90 days. This means as many as 32 strokes were prevented as a result of the intervention initiated in the SPC. The savings both to the individual and the health system are immense.

I got one!

Influenza vaccination is now available for sale to people who are not in a risk category. The cost is \$20.00. Saskatoon Health Region Public Health Services provides immunization, by appointment only, at various locations in Saskatoon. Call 655-4FLU or visit 4flu.ca for more information.

Healthy Living



Proper hand washing is one of the best defenses against the spread of germs and infections. Always wash your hands before preparing or eating food, treating a cut, caring for an ill person, handling contact lenses, using the washroom, changing a diaper, playing with a pet or handling garbage.

Make sure to wash all surfaces of your hands and wrists thoroughly. Get soap in between your fingers and around your thumbs.

Watch Global News Thursday and Friday for more health tips.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca