

t-PA Information sheet

t-PA (tissue plasminogen activator) is a medication approved by the FDA for use in the treatment of Acute Ischemic Stroke. The medication is utilized only after specific criteria are met and a head CT is completed to rule out hemorrhagic stroke. The medication can be used up to 3 hours after the onset of symptoms or the last time the patient was "known normal." The thrombolytic drug alteplase (rt-PA) has been licensed for use within 3 hours of ischemic stroke in the USA, Canada, and most European countries.

t-PA is a thrombolytic. It works as a "clot buster", dissolving blood clots that can plug arteries in the brain which cause stroke. Successful treatment could mean the patient is more likely to make a good recovery from their stroke. Thrombolytic drugs, however, can also cause serious bleeding in the brain which can be fatal. Please understand that the severity and location of your stroke along with time to treatment can affect your outcome after thrombolytics. Data from one well accepted study, in which all patients were treated in less than 3 hours, 1 out of 9 received benefit and 1 out of 16 had a serious bleeding complication. Thrombolytic therapy has now been evaluated in several randomized trials in acute ischemic stroke.

At Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, alteplase is used only when strict inclusion and exclusion criteria are met by the patient. Family members and/or the patient have the right to refuse treatment with alteplase (rt-PA). Other alternative treatments related to the patient's medical condition may also be available and will be presented along with their risks and benefits by your physician.

Please feel free to ask any questions related to the treatment of stroke. Educational resources dealing with stroke prevention and recognition of signs and symptoms are also available for patients and family members.

Signature: _____

Date: _____