NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION®
HOPE AFTER STROKE

National Stroke Awareness Month

Knowledge is Power

Understand Your Risk Factors and Prevent Stroke

www.stroke.org

National Stroke Association

ADVOCATE – Influence public policy and legislation on stroke survivor issues.

EDUCATE – Spread the word about stroke awareness.

PARTICIPATE – Get involved and make a difference in the world of stroke.

What is Stroke?

A stroke is a "brain attack" that happens when blood flow to the brain is cut off and brain cells are deprived of oxygen and begin to die.

When stroke occurs, abilities controlled by that area of the brain, such as memory and muscle control, are lost.

What Stroke Means for You and Your Family

While stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., there are approximately 7 million stroke survivors.

Long-term effects of stroke depend on what areas of the brain were impacted – and for how long.

Stroke survivors can experience challenges in:

- Physical abilities
- Daily living
- Communication and relationships
- Emotions and behavior

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The good news is that 80% of strokes are preventable.

And it is possible to take control of your health and reduce your risk.

The information here can help.

Who's at Risk?

Every year, nearly 800,000 Americans have a stroke.

Here's what increases risk:

- Family history of stroke
- A history of TIAs (Transient Ischemic Attacks)
- Medical conditions such as Afib or fibromuscular dysplasia
- Age – After age 55, stroke risk doubles every decade
- Race – African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian/ Pacific Islands have a greater risk
- Gender

Stroke and Women

- Annually, nearly 55,000 more women than men have strokes.
- Characteristics that are specific to women, such as taking birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy, can increase stroke risk.
- Women who have high blood pressure before or during pregnancy have a greater risk of stroke.

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Knowing the risk factors for stroke is the first step.

Now you can get started.

Visit Your Healthcare Provider

Ask About the Four H's!

- Heredity
- High Blood Pressure
- Heart Disease
- High Cholesterol

Heredity

- Alert your doctor if someone in your family has had a stroke, high blood pressure, or heart disease.
- If you don't know your history, ask around. A sibling or other relative may have more information.

What can you do?

- If you have a family history of stroke, take extra precaution to manage the risk factors you can control.

High Blood Pressure

- Ask your doctor whether you have high blood pressure – the No. 1 cause of stroke.

What can you do?

- Start a plan to eat healthier and exercise.
- Ask about medications that can be effective in lowering your blood pressure and keeping it down.

Heart Disease

- Determine your overall heart health. Conditions like atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, AFib, valve defects, and enlarged heart chambers can block vessels in or leading to the brain.

What can you do?

- Ask you doctor about treatment, such as surgical procedures or taking aspirin or blood-thinning therapy to prevent clots.

High Cholesterol

- Cholesterol is a fatty substance in blood. If there's too much cholesterol in your blood, it can clog arteries and cause a stroke.

Total Cholesterol	**< 200 mg/dL**
LDL/Bad Cholesterol	**< 100 mg/dL**
HDL/Good Cholesterol	**> 40 mg/dL for men;**
	> 50 mg/dL for women

What can you do?

- Take steps to eat healthier and start exercising.
- Ask about medications. They can be effective in reducing your cholesterol and keeping it down.

Conditions to Ask About

- **Sleep Apnea** – Untreated, this can cause high blood pressure, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, heart attacks, and stroke
- **Diabetes** – People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have a stroke
- **Circulation Problems** – Strokes can be caused by complications with any component of your circulation, including your heart, arteries, veins, and blood.

Conditions to Ask About Cont.

- **Hormones** – Hormone levels, especially estrogen in women, can play a role in stroke risk.
- **Fibromuscular dysphasia** – With this condition, some of the arteries that carry blood throughout the body are not fully developed.
- **Patent foramen ovale** – This is an opening between the two chambers of the heart where blood can clot.

What can YOU do?

- Be aware of these conditions, and talk to your doctor if you're experiencing any of them.
- Oftentimes, lifestyle changes, medication, or both can help offset your risk of stroke.

Back at Home

Stop Smoking

Smoking accelerates the forming of clots, thickens blood, and increases plaque buildup in the arteries. If you smoke, stop!

- Ask your doctor about nicotine patches, counseling, or programs that have worked for others.
- Don’t get discouraged – It could take several attempts.
- Keep trying – Quitting smoking can have almost immediate beneficial effects on your health.

Get to Your Healthy Weight

Carrying extra weight can make you more apt to develop high blood pressure, heart problems, and diabetes – all increasing your risk of stroke.

- Talk to your doctor about your ideal weight, body mass index, and percentage of body fat to make sure you're in a healthy range.
- Losing just 10 pounds can improve your health and reduce your risk of stroke.

Be Active

Physical activity can help you lose weight and reduce stress which can lower blood pressure and cholesterol, control diabetes, and improve your overall health.

- Talk to your doctor about starting an exercise program.
- Try to be active for 30 minutes every day.
- If you can't do it all at once, try to be active for 10 to 15 minutes at a time.

Make Healthy Food Choices

This is about nutrition – not dieting. The food choices you make can improve your health and reduce your risk of stroke.

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, which are high in fiber.
- Limit salt to help lower your blood pressure.
- Eat less cholesterol and fat which can create plaque buildup in your arteries.

Limit Alcoholic Drinks

Drinking too much alcohol can increase blood pressure and the risk of stroke.

- Drink in moderation – No more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.
- Know your portions – A standard portion is 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor.
- Opt for red wine – It contains resveratrol which can protect the heart and brain.

Reduce Your Risk Recap

At the doctor

Assess the 4 Hs:

- ❑ Heredity
- ❑ High blood pressure
- ❑ Heart disease
- ❑ High cholesterol

Take steps to treat:

- ❑ Sleep Apnea
- ❑ Diabetes
- ❑ Circulation problems
- ❑ Hormone issues
- ❑ Heart issues, such as , AFib, fibromuscular dysphasia, or patent foramen ovale (PFO)

At home

- ❑ Stop smoking
- ❑ Maintain a healthy weight
- ❑ Be Active
- ❑ Watch what you eat
- ❑ Drink less alcohol

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Remember!

You can take steps to reduce your risk of stroke!

We're Here to Help!

National Stroke Association offers:

- Resources: brochures, fact sheets, decision making tools
- Health games and mobile applications
- Advocacy
- Support
- Hope

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Learn more at stroke.org