

How to Reduce Your Risk of Stroke

There are uncontrollable risk factors regarding stroke: being over age 55; male; African-American, Hispanic or Asian; from a family with a history of stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). Regardless, there are things you can do to lower your risk of stroke.

1. Have your blood pressure checked each year. Work with your doctor to bring it into acceptable levels. High blood pressure (hypertension) is the leading cause of stroke, and stroke is the #1 cause of disability.
2. Find out if you have an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation, which can cause clots.
3. If you smoke, stop. Avoid second-hand smoke.
4. If you drink alcohol, do it in moderation. That means a maximum of 1 drink a day for a woman and everyone over 65 and at most 2 drinks a day for a man under 65.
5. If you are diabetic, follow your doctor's advice to control it.
6. Exercise – every day.
7. Eat less salt and less fat.

F.A.S.T.

Act **F.A.S.T.** if you think someone may have suffered a stroke.

F)ace – Ask the person to smile. Does one side droop?

A)rms – Ask him/her to lift both arms. Does one drift downward?

S)peech – Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred? Can he/she repeat the sentence correctly?

T)ime – If you see any of these symptoms, call 911 or get to the hospital immediately. Time is critical. Brain cells are dying.

May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Prayer: *O God, creator of all, thank you for my life. Teach me to honor this and all the gifts you have given me by caring for them each day as you would wish. Amen.*