

Stroke and Heart Disease are an Epidemic in the U.S.

MANY DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY ARE AT A HIGH RISK FOR HEART ATTACK OR STROKE



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The good news is that many of the major risk factors for these problems can be prevented or controlled

Getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked are very important first steps to help reduce your risk. Lifestyle choices can also help protect your health. These include eating healthy, exercising regularly and following your health care provider's advice and guidance.

Remember your ABCS

ABCS stands for:

- Aspirin therapy may have a small benefit for some
- Blood pressure control
- Cholesterol management
- Smoking cessation

Keep the ABCS in mind every day. Bring it up when you talk with your health care provider.

Preventing a stroke: what you can do

You can help prevent stroke by making healthy choices and controlling any health conditions you may have.

Healthy living

Many strokes could be prevented through healthy lifestyle changes and working with your health care providers to control health conditions that raise your risk for stroke.

High cholesterol affects 1 in 3 American adults. More than half of these people don't have the condition under control. Half of adults with high cholesterol don't get treatment.

If your blood pressure or cholesterol is high, take steps to lower it. Including a healthier diet, getting more exercise and following your health care provider's instructions about your medicines.



Take action and get inspired, find tips and resources to help you make healthy choices that are right for you.

■ Eat Healthy For Your Heart

What you eat has a big impact on your heart health which can increase your risk for stroke. High cholesterol and high blood pressure also increases your chances.

When planning your meals and snacks, there are four things to try to reduce your risk of a stroke and heart disease:

■ Four ways to reduce your risk:

1. *Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables*
2. *Check food labels and select foods with less sodium.* Too much salt can increase your blood pressure
3. *Limit foods high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol because they can make your cholesterol worse.* You can find this information on the nutrition facts label
4. *Cook at home more often.* When possible, choose foods that are low in sodium or have no salt added. You need to limit yourself from using sauces, mixes and instant products, including flavored rice and ready-made pasta

■ Keep a Healthy Weight

Being overweight or being obese increases your risk for stroke. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, your doctors often calculate your body mass index (BMI). If you have an idea or know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI at

CDC's Assessing Your Weight. Doctors sometimes also use waist and hip measurements to measure excess body fat.

■ Get Regular Daily Physical Activity—Get Moving

Make physical activity a part of your daily life. Physical activity can help you stay at a healthy weight and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure levels. The surgeon general recommends for adults, 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity, such as a brisk walk, each week. Children and teens should get 1 hour of physical activity every day.

Those who experience obesity (body mass index – BMI) ≥ 30 or who are overweight (BMI 25-29.9) can increase the risk for heart disease and stroke. Know your BMI. To keep healthy, make physical activity part of your daily life. This will also help you fight high blood pressure and cholesterol. Try to fit in 2.5 hours of moderate exercise every week. For people who sit a lot, or who are sedentary, walking can be a good start.

■ Don't Smoke

Smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. If you are a smoker, set a date to quit and ask your health care provider if you need help. Also, avoid secondhand smoke and support smoke-free policies in your community.

Smoking cigarettes greatly increase your chances of having a stroke. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, if you quit, this will lower your risk for stroke. Your doctor can suggest several ways to help you quit.





Did you realize
that the brain is
capable of healing
itself even after an
injury like a stroke?

■ Limit Alcohol

Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women should have no more than one per day.

Control your medical conditions

Talk with your doctor about steps you can take to lower your risk for stroke.

If you have heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, you can take steps to lower your risk for stroke.

■ Check Cholesterol

Your doctor should test your cholesterol levels at least once every 5 years. Talk with your health care team about this simple blood test. If you have high cholesterol, medicine and lifestyle changes can help lower your risk for stroke.

■ Control Blood Pressure

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis. Talk to your health care team about how often you should check your levels. You can also check your blood pressure at home, at a doctor's office, or at a pharmacy.

If you do have high blood pressure, your doctor might prescribe medicine, suggest some changes in your lifestyle, or recommend that you choose foods with lower sodium (salt).

■ Control Diabetes

If your doctor thinks you have symptoms of diabetes, he or she may recommend that you get tested. If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar levels regularly.

Talk with your health care team about treatment options. Your doctor may recommend certain lifestyle changes, such as getting more physical activity or choosing healthier foods. These actions will help keep your blood sugar under good control and help lower your risk for stroke.

■ Treat Heart Disease

If you have certain heart conditions, such as coronary artery disease or atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat), your health care team may recommend medical treatment or surgery. Taking care of heart problems can help prevent stroke.

■ Take Your Medicine

If you are taking medicine to treat heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. If you don't understand something, you should always ask questions. Never stop taking your medicine without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

■ Work With Your Health Care Team

You and your health care team can work together to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to stroke. Share your health history, get your blood pressure and your cholesterol checked and discuss your treatment plan regularly. Bring a list of questions to your appointments like if taking low-dose aspirin is right for you.

If you've already had a stroke or TIA, your health care team will work with you to prevent further strokes. Your treatment plan will include medicine or surgery and lifestyle changes to lower your risk for another stroke. Be sure you take your medicine as directed and follow your doctor's instructions.

Believe in Recovery

*There's a famous saying
that says, "If you shoot
for the moon. Even if
you miss, you will land
among the stars."*

