



Wellness Buddy Tip

Providing guidance and support to make the "healthy choice the easy choice."

Chronic Disease Health Promotion and Education Program
Jackson County Health Department

Risk Factors for Stroke May is American Stroke Month

Knowing your risk factors for stroke is the first step in preventing or reducing your chances of having a stroke.

Some risk factors can be changed by improving your lifestyle and treated but others cannot.

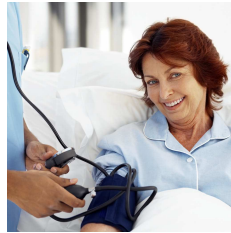
Changeable or treatable risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- Tobacco use
- Diabetes mellitus
- Carotid or other artery disease
- TIAs
- Atrial fibrillation or other heart disease
- Certain blood disorders
- High blood cholesterol
- Physical inactivity and obesity
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Illegal drug use

Risk factors that cannot be changed or treated:

- Increasing age
- Gender
- Heredity and race
- Prior stroke

High blood pressure is the single most important risk factor because it's the No. 1 cause of stroke. Have your blood pressure checked by a health care professional at least once every two years



and if it's consistently 140/90 or above talk to your doctor about how to control it.

10 Ways to Control Your Blood Pressure

1. Know your blood pressure. Have it checked regularly.
2. Know what your weight should be. Keep it at that level.
3. Avoid salty foods. Don't use too much salt in cooking or at meals.
4. Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber foods according to American Heart Association recommendations.
5. Control alcohol intake. Don't have more than one drink a day if you're a woman, or two a day if you're a man.
6. Take your blood pressure medicine exactly as prescribed. Don't run out of pills even for a single day.
7. Keep appointments with the doctor.
8. Get regular exercise ac-

ording to your doctor's directives.

9. Live a normal life in every other way.
10. Be sure all family members check their blood pressure regularly.

Tobacco damages blood vessels so don't use it in any form.

Diabetes can cause disease of blood vessels in the brain and in this way increases the risk of stroke.

Carotid or other artery disease damage, fatty buildup becoming blocked by a clot, may cause a stroke.

Reducing and treating transient ischemia attacks (TIAs)—"mini-strokes"—can lessen the risk of a major stroke.

During atrial fibrillation the blood pools and clots increasing the risk of stroke.

Blood disorders such as sickle cell anemia increase stroke risk because cells "stick" to blood vessel walls and may block arteries.

Check out the online tools at HeartHub.org to help you manage blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, physical activity, weight and medications.

This information has been provided by the American Heart Association.

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Special points of interest:

- *In the past, doctors couldn't do much to help stroke victims. That's not true today.*

Now stroke doesn't have to lead to disability or death...IF you recognize a stroke get to the hospital immediately.

The clot-dissolving drug tPA can reduce disability if it's given within three hours after an ischemic stroke starts. (Ischemic strokes are caused by clots and are by far the most common type of stroke).

Unfortunately, tPA isn't used as often as it could be because many people don't seek care quickly. Don't make that mistake. If you or someone near you has any warning signs of a stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately!



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