

Health Awareness



Know the Signs of Stroke: Acting in Time Can Save a Life

(NAPS)—You work hard to help keep yourself and your loved ones healthy. To help, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) reminds everyone that stroke is a leading cause of death and disability in the United States. About 800,000 people in the country have a stroke each year. The good news is, when treated quickly, survival is possible and damage can be greatly reduced. That's why understanding your risk for stroke, knowing signs of stroke, and acting in time are critical and can make all the difference for you or someone you care for. If you have a greater chance of stroke, there are also steps you can take now to help prevent one.

What is Stroke?

There are two major types of stroke. One, called a hemorrhagic stroke, occurs when a brain blood vessel breaks and blood escapes into or around the brain. The other, called an ischemic stroke, or "brain attack," occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, brain cells stop getting the oxygen and nutrients they need.

Risk Factors for Stroke

Anyone can have a stroke, but some people are at greater risk than others.

- Conditions:
 - Previous Stroke or Transient Ischemic Attack
 - High Blood Pressure
 - High Cholesterol
 - Heart Disease
 - Diabetes
 - Sickle Cell Disease
 - Use Of Anti-Clotting Medications
 - Certain Cancers
- Behaviors:
 - Unhealthy Diet
 - Physical Inactivity
 - Obesity
 - Excess Alcohol
 - Tobacco Use
 - Stimulant Drug Use
 - Neck Injury
- Individual Characteristics:
 - Being over the age of 55
 - More common in women than men
 - Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and Alaska Natives are at higher risk

Signs of Stroke

The symptoms of stroke usually happen quickly and include one or more of the following:



Call 911 immediately if you think you or someone around you is having a stroke.

- Sudden **NUMBNESS** or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden **CONFUSION**, trouble speaking, or understanding speech
- Sudden **TROUBLE SEEING** in one or both eyes
- Sudden **TROUBLE WALKING**, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden **SEVERE HEADACHE** with no known cause

Act in Time: Call 911 Right Away

Stroke is a medical emergency. If you believe you are having a stroke—or if you think someone you know is having a stroke—call **911 immediately**. Do not wait for the symptoms to improve or worsen. Making the decision to call for medical help right away can save a life or mean avoiding a life-long disability.

Ways to Help Prevent Stroke

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

- Manage any health problems you may have, especially high blood pressure, but also diabetes, high cholesterol, and obesity to lower your risk for stroke.
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly—about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol.
- If you smoke, take steps to quit. If you'd like some help with quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) for free resources and support.

For more information from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, visit stroke.nih.gov.