



# STROKE AWARENESS

## WHAT IS A STROKE?

The brain needs a constant supply of blood, which carries the oxygen and nutrients it needs to function. Specific arteries supply blood to specific areas of the brain. A stroke occurs when one of these arteries to the brain is either blocked or bursts. As a result, part of the brain does not get the blood it needs, so it starts to die.

## STROKE FACTS

In the United States, about 795,000 people suffer a stroke each year. Someone has a stroke every 40 seconds, and every 4 minutes someone dies from stroke. Statistics show that about 60% of stroke deaths occur in females and 40% in males. Stroke is also the leading cause of serious long-term disability in the United States. There are over 7 million stroke survivors live in United States, and two-thirds of them are currently disabled. Around 25% of people who recover from their first stroke will have another within 5 years.

## UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS

There are many risk factors for stroke, including both genetics and lifestyle. Having three or more of these risk factors multiplies your risk for stroke. The highest risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol levels
- Narrowed arteries
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Arrhythmia or AFIB
- Previous stroke
- Being 65 or older
- Family history of stroke
- Smoking
- Poor diet
- Lack of exercise
- Consuming more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF STROKE

- Work closely with your healthcare professional to control high blood pressure, high cholesterol, atrial fibrillation, and diabetes. Your doctor may recommend different medications or procedures to help prevent another stroke.
- If you smoke cigarettes, stop smoking. The risk of ischemic stroke in current smokers is double that of nonsmokers.
- Reduce alcohol consumption. Regular heavy drinking can raise blood pressure.
- Eat a healthy diet. This includes decreasing or eliminating your intake of saturated and trans fats, lowering sodium intake, and eating more fruits and vegetables. Most processed and fast foods should be avoided.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise has many beneficial effects on the heart and blood vessels. It strengthens the heart muscle, increases oxygen intake, lowers blood pressure and helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Take time to enjoy life and lower stress levels. Although a certain amount of stress is unavoidable, studies suggest that stress contributes to high blood pressure. By managing stress with exercise, relaxation techniques, and counseling, if needed, stroke risk may be reduced.

## SPOT A STROKE™



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Consult your doctor for more information and prevention tips. You can also learn more online at:

<https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke>

<https://www.strokeinfo.org/reducing-stroke-risk/>