

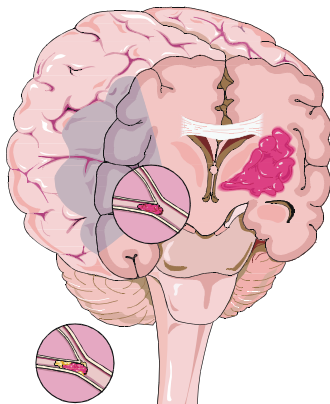


INFORMATION PAGE

Stroke Prevention

To prevent stroke, you need to effectively manage your treatable risk factors by making them go down or go away.

The risk for stroke increases with age. However, by starting early and controlling treatable risk factors you can lower your risk of stroke. Common treatable risk factors for stroke include high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol. Your chance of having a stroke increases as the number and severity of risk factors increases.



MANAGING YOUR RISK FACTORS

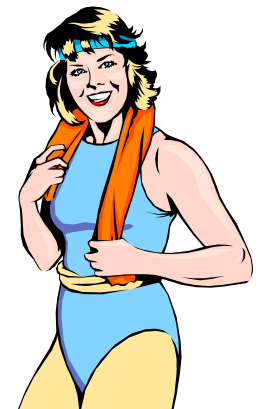
◆ High blood pressure (hypertension)

High blood pressure is by far the most common treatable risk factor for stroke. Controlling blood pressure will also help you avoid heart disease, diabetes, and kidney failure. If your blood pressure is high, you and your doctor need to work out an individual strategy to bring it down to the normal range.



You may want to do the following:

- Maintain proper weight.
- Avoid drugs known to raise blood pressure.
- Cut down on salt.
- Eat fruits and vegetables to increase potassium in your diet.
- Exercise more.
- Take anti-hypertensive medicine prescribed by your doctor.



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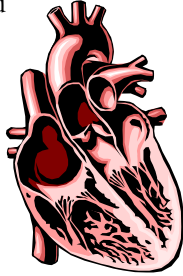
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Patient Education • 7601 E. Imperial Hwy. • Downey, CA 90242

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◆ Heart disease

Common heart disorders such as coronary artery disease, valve defects, irregular heart beat, and enlargement of one of the heart's chambers can result in blood clots that may break loose and block vessels in or leading to the brain. A doctor can evaluate your risk factors and help you decide if you will benefit from aspirin or anti-clotting therapy.



◆ High cholesterol

Cholesterol is transported through the blood stream by specialized proteins called Low density lipoprotein (LDL) and high density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL cholesterol increases the risk of stroke by accelerating “hardening of the arteries” (atherosclerosis), while HDL cholesterol lowers it. You can ask your doctor to check your cholesterol levels. If LDL-cholesterol is too high, your doctor may recommend a low fat diet, more exercise, or cholesterol-lowering medications.

◆ Diabetes

You may think this disorder affects only the body's ability to use sugar, or glucose. But it also causes destructive changes in the blood vessels throughout the body, including the brain and kidney. Also, if blood glucose levels are high at the time of a stroke, then brain damage

is usually more severe and extensive than when blood glucose is well-controlled. Treating diabetes can delay the onset of complications that increase the risk of stroke.



◆ Cigarette smoking

Cigarette smoking has been linked to the development of hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis). Your doctor can recommend programs and medications that may help you quit smoking. By quitting, at any age, you also reduce your risk of lung disease, heart disease, and a number of cancers including lung cancer.



◆ Warning signs or history of stroke

If you experience symptoms of a stroke, get help at once. Dial 911 for emergency medical assistance.



Common symptoms of stroke include sudden:

- weakness on one side of the body
- numbness on one side of the body
- loss of vision
- loss of ability to speak
- vertigo and inability to keep your balance

Information on this page is partially based on Brain Basic: Preventing Stroke (reviewed July 2001) by National Institute on Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Disclaimer: This information is intended for your use as appropriate. There are other possible options. Always speak to your doctor, nurse, or other persons who you see for your health care needs if you have any questions.

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