THE FACTS

Facts from National Stroke Association

- Someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds.
- About 795,000 strokes will occur this year.
- About 55,000 more women than men have a stroke each year.
- Two million brain cells die every minute during stroke increasing risk of permanent brain damage, disability or death.

What is a stroke?

A stroke is an interruption of the blood supply to a part of the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel is either blocked by a blood clot or bursts from weakness.

The blood clot can either form in the vessel in the brain or it can become lodged in the vessel after it breaks away from another clot formed somewhere else in the body.

After the blood supply has stopped going to the brain, the brain cells will start to die. This can severely impair certain functions like walking, talking, and breathing.

Are you at risk?

Medical risk factors
- Previous stroke
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Atrial fibrillation
- Carotid artery disease
- Diabetes

Lifestyle risk factors
- Smoking
- Overweight
- Drinking too much alcohol

Ask your doctors for more details on how to lower your risk.

Symptoms

You may be having a stroke if you experience sudden:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg – especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

A stroke can happen quickly and quietly. Be prepared to act FAST and call 9-1-1 when you see that someone is having a stroke.

How to Avoid Stroke

- Get your blood pressure checked. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for stroke. A health care provider can help you get your blood pressure under control.
- Get your cholesterol checked. High cholesterol levels can clog arteries and cause a stroke. Talk to your doctor about having your cholesterol checked and what you can do to lower it if it measures more than 200.
- Control your diabetes. Failing to control your blood sugar can lead to other health problems that are major risk factors for stroke.
- Find out if you have Atrial Fibrillation. “Afib” is an abnormal heart rate and can significantly increase your risk of stroke by causing blood to pool and possibly clot inside your heart.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight puts strain on your blood vessels and can cause other stroke risk factors like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. You should exercise and eat healthy. Talk to your health care provider about establishing a plan that will work for you.
- Quit smoking. Smoking actually doubles your risk for stroke.
- Drink alcohol in moderation. If you drink alcohol, drink no more than two drinks each day. If you don’t drink alcohol, don’t start.