

May is Stroke and High Blood Pressure Awareness Month.



It is important to raise awareness that stroke can happen to anyone, at any age and at any time. Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S., striking nearly 800,000 and killing nearly 130,000 people each year.

If you suspect a stroke, remember the letters in the word FAST. F is for face—does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven or lopsided? A is for arms—is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? S is for speech—is their speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the person able to correctly repeat the words? T is for time—if someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911. Time is important! Leading a healthy lifestyle, including lowering risk factors like high blood pressure and weight, can also help reduce your stroke risk. Let's become more aware and watch for the warning signs.



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A STROKE

- Sudden numbness or weakness on one side of the face or facial drooping
- Sudden numbness or weakness in an 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, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Five Alternative Ways to Lower Your Blood Pressure

Hypertension strikes one in three American adults. Learn the top lifestyle strategies that can make a real impact on lowering your blood pressure.

About one in every three American adults has hypertension, or high blood pressure. Medication is often prescribed, but that's not the only solution. There are many lifestyle strategies that have also been shown to have an impact. For some, weight loss combined with exercise and a healthy eating plan may even reduce or eliminate the need for medication altogether.

Your doctor can help you decide whether to take a combined approach (medication plus lifestyle) or whether to try following these healthy lifestyle strategies first:

1. Increase exercise. Aerobic exercise can lower blood pressure and can also help with weight loss. It doesn't take a time-consuming workout in a gym to reap the benefits, either.
 - As few as 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week has been shown to be effective.
 - Aerobic activities such as walking, biking, swimming and water aerobics often produce the best results.

Are you at a healthy weight? Have you checked your BMI lately?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. A high BMI can be an indicator of high body fatness. BMI can be used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems but it is not diagnostic of the body fatness or health of an individual.

Weight Management

Slow and steady: How to lose weight and keep it off



Plan ahead. Don't get caught at the vending machine. Keep your kitchen or workplace stocked with nutritious options.

Looking for solid weight-loss advice? Set moderate goals and take it slowly if you want to keep pounds off. Your skirt is too tight. You can't zip your jeans. You don't even want to think about putting on a swimsuit. You look in the mirror and mutter about how you've got to lose weight. Though there's enough dieting advice out there to fill a dozen refrigerators, be wary of programs that offer quick weight-loss solutions. Remember, modest goals and a slow course will increase your chances of losing the weight and keeping it off.

Back to basics

If you are really serious about long-term weight loss, look to change habits, not slash calories and deprive yourself. Start with these tips:

- Maintain a sensible calorie intake. If you cut back too much, you will risk failure and lose muscle tissue – not fat. A one- to two-pound per week weight loss is optimal.
- Spread your calories evenly throughout the day. Do you eat as little as possible during the day so you can save calories for later? This approach almost always backfires. You'll find yourself raiding the kitchen in the late afternoon. On an 1,800-calorie meal plan, for instance, aim to have 300 to 500 calories at your meals. This leaves room for two snacks of 100 to 200 calories in between. **Eat every three hours to keep hunger at bay.**

Should 15,000 Steps a Day Be Our New Exercise Target?

Taking 10,000 steps per day is often suggested as a desirable exercise goal for people who wish to improve their health. But a new study of postal workers in Scotland suggests that that number could be too conservative and that, to best protect our hearts, many of us might want to start moving quite a bit more.

It has been almost 70 years since the publication of the London Transit Workers Study, a famous work in which researchers tracked the heart health of London bus drivers and conductors. They found that the conductors, who walked up and down bus aisles throughout the workday, were substantially less likely to develop or die from heart disease than the drivers, who sat almost constantly while at work.

This study was one of the first to persuasively show that being physically active could lower someone's risk for heart disease, while being sedentary had the opposite effect.

Since then, countless large-scale studies have substantiated that finding, and at this point, there is little doubt that moving or not moving during the day will affect the health of your heart.