

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

Prevent stroke



Stroke occurs when the brain isn't getting enough blood flow, which deprives brain cells of oxygen. Without oxygen, brain cells lose function. If the situation isn't quickly corrected, it can cause cell death and permanent disability. That's why **it's essential to know the common warning signs of a stroke** and risk factors and to practice a healthy lifestyle.

Know the sudden signs

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Trouble seeing or blurred vision in one or both eyes.
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Severe [headache](#) with no known cause.

Remember FAST to recognize the signs of stroke

F

Face drooping

Does one side of the face droop or feel numb?
Ask the person to smile.

A

Arm weakness

Is one arm weak or numb?
Ask the person to raise both arms.

S

Speech difficulty

Is speech slurred or difficult to understand?
Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase.

T

Time to call emergency services

If you notice these signs, call 911 and get to a hospital emergency department immediately. Don't wait for symptoms to disappear.
"Time is brain," and every second is crucial for treatment.

Know the risk factors

- Family history of stroke or heart attack.
- Age 55 or older.
- Medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease.
- Ethnicity: African American and Hispanic descent is at higher risk.
- Sex: Men have a higher risk, while women are more likely to die of stroke.

Reduce your risk

- Take medication as directed.
- Do not use tobacco.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes each day.
- Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Lower stress.
- Get regular checkups.

Although strokes are a common cause of death and disability, stroke risk can be reduced significantly through awareness, managing existing medical conditions and living a healthy lifestyle. Remember to act FAST if you spot signs of stroke and "time is brain."

Information adapted from [Is it a stroke? How to know and help](#), [Stroke: Symptoms and causes](#) and [With stroke, time is survival](#).

[mayoclinichealthsystem.org](https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org)

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