

BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

SMART LOCAL 36 BENEFIT FUND

BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL, HEART

WARNING SIGNS FOR A STROKE

Act FAST

FAST is an easy way to remember and identify the most common symptoms of a stroke. Recognition of stroke and calling 9-1-1 will determine how quickly someone will receive treatment and help. Getting to a hospital rapidly will more likely lead to a better recovery.

F Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

T Time: If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately. Every minute counts!

When you have a stroke, your brain isn't getting the blood it needs. The sooner you get help, the less likely you'll have serious, lasting problems. And the better your chance of recovery.

Sometimes a stroke develops gradually. But you're more likely to have one or more sudden warning signs like these:

- Numbness or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side
- Confusion or trouble understanding other people
- Trouble speaking
- Trouble seeing with one or both eyes

- Trouble walking or staying balanced or coordinated
- Dizziness
- Severe headache that comes on for no reason

What to Do

A stroke is a medical emergency.

Don't wait! Every minute counts. If you have even one symptom for more than a few minutes:

- Call 911. An ambulance can get you to a hospital without delay. Don't drive yourself.
- **Note the time when symptoms started. (The hospital staff needs to know.)**

What if you're with someone who's having symptoms, but you're not sure if it's a stroke? Some people may deny there's a problem. They don't want others to make a fuss. Or they might say, "What's the big rush?"

Consider this: What's the worst thing that can happen if this isn't a stroke? An unnecessary trip to the hospital. What's the worst thing that can happen if it is a stroke and you ignore it?

Don't take chances. Call 911.

Be Prepared

Few people think a stroke will happen to them. But given how fast damage can happen, it's something you should think about

HEART HEALTHY RECIPE

PORK CHOPS WITH PIZZAZZ AND CAULIFLOWER MASH

4 4-OUNCE BONELESS PORK LOIN CHOPS

1 TBS. WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

1/3 CUP PINEAPPLE OR MANGO PRESERVES (NO-SUGAR OR LOW SUGAR ADDED)

1 TBS DIJON MUSTARD

1 ½ LOW-SODIUM CHICKEN BROTH

1 MEDIUM HEAD CAULIFLOWER CUT INTO FLOWERETTES

1 CUP GREEK NONFAT YOGURT

3 TBS PARMESAN CHEESE

1 MINCED GARLIC CLOVE

COAT LARGE SKILLET WITH NON-STICK SPRAY AND BROWN PORK CHOPS OVER MED-HIGH HEAT, 3-4 MIN. PER SIDE. SET ASIDE. IN THE SAME PAN, SPRINKLE FLOUR AND STIR IN PRESERVES AND MUSTARD. GRADUALLY ADD BROTH. BRING TO A BOIL, LOWER HEAT AND STIR UNTIL THICKENED. RETURN PORK CHOPS TO THE PAN AND COOK ABOUT 10 MINUTES (UNTIL MEAT IS DONE). S&P TO TASTE. STEAM CAULIFLOWER OR MICROWAVE UNTIL DONE. PUREE UNTIL CREAMY WITH YOGURT, PARMESAN CHEESE AND GARLIC.



especially if you have a medical condition that raises your risk for having one. Advance planning may end up making a big difference.

Ask your doctor or nurse which hospitals in your area are primary stroke centers, with 24-hour emergency care. Find out which hospital or medical facility is closest to your home or work.

Types of Strokes

Most common is an **ischemic stroke**. It happens when a blood vessel that takes blood to your brain gets blocked. Often, it's by a blood clot that traveled from another part of your body. For example, fatty deposits in arteries can break off, flow to the brain, and cause blood clots. And sometimes clots form in the heart when you have poor blood flow because of an irregular heartbeat, called atrial fibrillation.

A **hemorrhagic stroke** happens when a blood vessel in your brain bursts and bleeds, which can damage the tissue. They're less common but more serious. Uncontrolled high blood pressure and over-using blood thinners can lead to this kind of stroke.

A **transient ischemic attack (TIA)** is a "mini stroke" from a temporary blockage. Although it doesn't cause permanent brain damage, it may cause stroke symptoms that could last minutes or hours.

Medical Conditions You Can Control

Make sure you're working with your doctor to treat these conditions, which make a stroke more likely.

- Atrial fibrillation (AFib)

- Blood disorders, such as sickle cell disease or severe anemia
 - Diabetes
 - Hardened arteries (also called atherosclerosis)
 - Heart disease
 - High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
 - High cholesterol
 - Being overweight or obese
- High blood pressure, 140/90 or higher, is the leading risk for stroke. When blood pushes too forcefully against the walls of your arteries, it can damage or weaken them and lead to stroke. Ideally, try to keep your blood pressure below 120/80.

AFib makes you five times more likely to have a stroke, according to the National Stroke Association.

Coronary artery disease, heart failure, an enlarged heart, and other heart diseases make you more likely to have a stroke.

Too much cholesterol raises your chances of both heart disease and atherosclerosis. High cholesterol contributes to plaque buildup in arteries, which can block blood flow to the brain.

People with diabetes face a higher risk of stroke because they often have other health problems as well as stroke risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease.

Extra weight, along with the less-active lifestyle that can come with it, raises the chances of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes.

Medications

The blood thinners used to prevent blood clots and lower your risk of stroke can also raise the risk if used incorrectly. Check with your doctor to make sure you need to

take the medicine and that you're taking the right dose.

Hormones in birth control pills and patches and postmenopausal therapy place some women at greater risk for stroke. If you're over 35 or have high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol, or if you smoke, ask your doctor about your risk and your options.

Unhealthy Lifestyle

Eating a lot of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, and salt makes you more likely to have a stroke and the conditions that put you at risk. Not getting regular exercise will also lead to health problems that can increase the chance of a stroke.

Other "bad habits" for stroke include:

- Alcohol
- Recreational drugs
- Smoking

Smoking lowers oxygen levels in your blood, forcing your heart to work harder and making it easier for blood clots to form. Nicotine raises your blood pressure. Cigarette smoke can also damage your arteries and make atherosclerosis worse. According to the National Stroke Association, smokers have twice the risk of stroke as nonsmokers. Even secondhand smoke can have an effect.

Some research has linked too much alcohol to a higher risk of stroke. It can raise your blood pressure and boost the level of certain fats in your blood, which can harden your arteries. Women should have no more than one drink a day; men, two.



Mary Beth Cyliax, RN, CCM

314-652-8175 ext. 310

Call me anytime with questions

All information contained within this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only. Members should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something they may have read on this website. Information obtained from National Stroke Association, American Heart Association and WebMD websites.