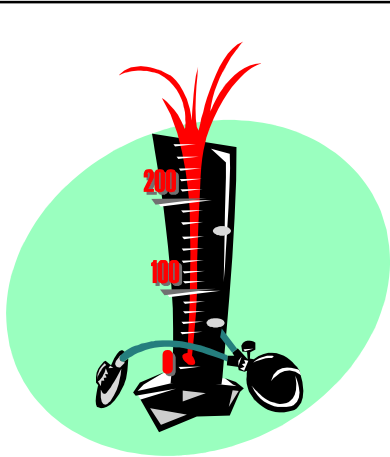


# STROKE AWARENESS DOES MATTER

It Can Lead To Preventive Measures & Timely Treatment



*A blood pressure check can indicate if you have a high probability of stroke.*

## Don't Delay

Most people have heard the word “*stroke*” and know it's a medical problem. Yet, many people cannot name one symptom associated with strokes and/or believe that strokes are untreatable.

This lack of knowledge causes victims to react slowly. The resulting delay in treatment increases the odds of death or disability.

Strokes are not a "wait and see what happens next" problem. Treat a stroke as a **MEDICAL EMERGENCY!**

## WARNING SIGNS

One or more of the following signals may warn of a stroke. (They may come and go.) Heed the warnings and seek help immediately.

- ◆ Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm, leg. This commonly occurs on one side of the body.
- ◆ Loss of vision, particularly in one eye.
- ◆ Sudden confusion, difficulty speaking or understanding speech.
- ◆ Severe, sudden headaches with an unknown cause.
- ◆ Difficulty walking, unexplained dizziness, unsteadiness, loss of coordination and sudden falls.

## RISK FACTORS

There are certain factors that increase the risk of a stroke. The more risk factors you experience, the greater your chance of suffering from a stroke. Some of the factors are uncontrollable, such as age, race, gender, family history, a previous stroke (or TIA) and a history of diabetes. There are other risk factors that you have some control over and can take action to decrease or eliminate. They include:

- ◆ **Heart Disease** – Coronary heart disease can clog blood vessels with plaque. Atrial fibrillation can create blood clots that travel through the circulatory system and block arteries in the brain.
- ◆ **High Blood Pressure** – Increases the risk of stroke by four to six times. One in three adults are affected by high blood pressure (hypertension), making it the most important (controllable) factor.
- ◆ **Cigarette Smoking** – Damages the walls of blood vessels, raises blood pressure and speeds up the clogging of arteries. Smokers are twice as likely to have a stroke than nonsmokers.
- ◆ **Obesity** – Strains the circulatory system and increases the chances of other risk factors, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.
- ◆ **Sleep Apnea** – Increase blood pressure and may cause blood clots.

(Sources: American Stroke Assn., National Stroke Assn.)

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