

Stroke

Strokes are caused by a clot that blocks blood from getting to the brain or bleeding in the brain caused by a burst blood vessel. Stroke victims may experience problems with speech, comprehension, physical activity and normal daily tasks.

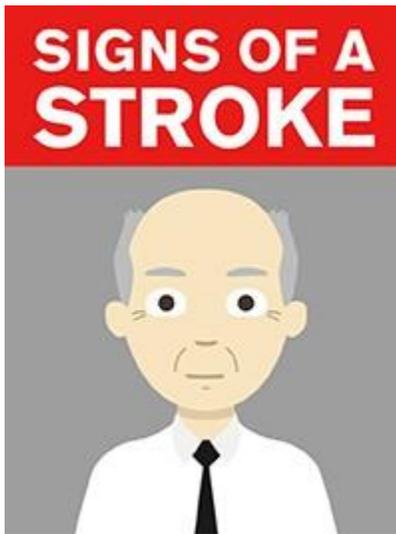
People are more likely to have a stroke if someone in their immediate family has had one.

Risk factors specific to women may include:

- Hormonal changes that come with [pregnancy](#), childbirth and menopause
- Smoking while on the pill
- Compared to white women, African American women have more strokes and have a higher risk of disability and death from stroke

What you can do to help prevent a stroke

Up to 80% of strokes can be prevented. Consider taking the following measures to help reduce your chances of having a stroke:



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- **Monitor your blood pressure.** Have your [blood pressure](#) checked every time you see your doctor.
- **Maintain healthy cholesterol levels.** Get regular cholesterol screenings. If yours is high, it may be controlled through healthy eating habits, physical activity or medications.
- **If you have Afib, which is a type of irregular heartbeat, control it with medications.** While it can occur at any age, it is more common in people 65 years and older and people with high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes.

- **Control your diabetes.** If you have [diabetes](#), work with your doctor to keep your blood sugars under control.
- **Quit smoking.** Smokers are more likely to have a stroke than nonsmokers. In addition, women who take birth control are at much greater risk for having a stroke.
- **Exercise.** Thirty minutes of moderate physical activity each day may help control cholesterol, diabetes, obesity and blood pressure.
- **Eat healthfully.** Pay attention to the food groups – include plenty of whole grains, fruit and vegetables. Avoid excess saturated fats, trans fats, sodium and sugar.
- **Keep a healthy weight.** Staying within the healthy weight range for your height reduces your risk for high cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.
- **Manage stress and anger.** Set realistic goals, maintain healthy relationships and use relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and stretching.
- **Drink in moderation.** Heavy drinking increases the risk of a stroke.
- **Talk to your doctor about aspirin therapy.** People at high risk for a stroke may benefit from a daily dose of aspirin.
- **Learn the symptoms of a stroke.** Knowing the symptoms may help you seek treatment more quickly, possibly preventing a stroke or lessening its effects. Symptoms may include sudden:
 - Numbness or weakness of 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

Other symptoms commonly found in women may include:

- Loss of consciousness or fainting
- General weakness
- Difficulty or shortness of breath
- Confusion, unresponsiveness or disorientation
- Sudden behavioral change
- Agitation
- Hallucination
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain
- Seizures
- Hiccups

Talk to your doctor

- Tell your doctor about your risk factors and discuss any illnesses, ongoing health concerns and family medical history.
- Get blood pressure and cholesterol screenings regularly.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for managing health conditions that put you at risk for a stroke