



### OTHER HEART DISEASE

People with coronary heart disease or heart failure have a higher risk of stroke than those with hearts that work normally. Dilated cardiomyopathy (an enlarged heart), heart valve disease and some types of congenital heart defects also raise the risk of stroke.

### SICKLE CELL DISEASE

(ALSO CALLED SICKLE CELL ANEMIA)

The genetic disorder mainly affects African-American and Hispanic children. “Sickled” red blood cells are less able to carry oxygen to tissues and organs. These cells also tend to stick to blood vessel walls, which can block arteries to the brain and cause a stroke.

### PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE

is the narrowing of blood vessels carrying blood to leg and arm muscles. It’s caused by fatty buildups of plaque in artery walls. People with peripheral artery disease have a higher risk of carotid artery disease, which raises their risk of stroke.

### CAROTID OR OTHER ARTERY DISEASE

The carotid arteries in your neck supply blood to your brain. A carotid artery narrowed by fatty deposits from atherosclerosis may become blocked by a blood clot. Carotid artery disease is also called carotid artery stenosis.



## UNDERSTANDING STROKE RISK



[StrokeAssociation.org/prevent](http://StrokeAssociation.org/prevent)  
**1-888-4-STROKE**



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## **EVERY 40 SECONDS, SOMEONE SUFFERS A STROKE.**

*Yet, 80 percent of strokes are preventable. Though certain risk factors — including heredity, age and race — can't be changed, several risk factors can be changed, treated or controlled.*



# TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR STROKE RISK

## **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HBP)**

HBP is the No. 1 cause of stroke and the most important controllable risk factor for stroke. People who are overweight or obese, over age 35, have a family history of HBP, African-Americans, pregnant women, and those who are physically inactive, eat too much salt and/or drink too much alcohol are at higher risk for HBP.

Of all people with high blood pressure, more than 20 percent are unaware of their condition. Are you one of them? If you don't know, see a healthcare professional to be tested.

### **How can you control your blood pressure?**

- *Eat a better diet, which may include reducing salt intake.*
- *Engage in regular physical activity.*
- *Maintain a healthy weight.*
- *Manage stress.*
- *Avoid tobacco smoke.*
- *Take your medication as prescribed.*
- *If you drink alcohol, limit your intake (no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men).*

## **CIGARETTE SMOKING**

The nicotine and carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke damage the cardiovascular system in many ways. The use of oral contraceptives combined with cigarette smoking greatly increases stroke risk.

## **DIABETES MELLITUS**

Many people with diabetes also have high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and are overweight. This increases their risk even more. Though diabetes is treatable, the presence of the disease still increases your risk of stroke.

## **POOR DIET**

Diets high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol can raise blood cholesterol levels. Diets high in sodium (salt) can contribute to increased blood pressure. Diets with excess calories can contribute to obesity. But a diet that includes five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day may reduce stroke risk.

## **PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND OBESITY**

Being inactive, obese or both can increase your risk of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. So go on a brisk walk, take the stairs and do whatever you can to make your life more active. Try to get a total of at least 30 minutes of activity on most or all days.

## **HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL**

It also appears that low HDL ("good") cholesterol is a risk factor for stroke in men, but more data are needed to verify its effect in women.

## **ATRIAL FIBRILLATION**

The heart's upper chambers quiver instead of beating effectively, which can let the blood pool and clot. If a clot breaks off, enters the bloodstream and lodges in an artery leading to the brain, a stroke results.