



Reduce Your Stroke Risk by Managing Health Conditions

Many of us walk off injuries or don't pay attention to signs that something's wrong. But when it comes to stroke risk, you can't afford to let things slide.

About 4 in 5 strokes are preventable. That's why it's vitally important to manage health conditions that increase your risk, adopt lifestyle choices that decrease your risk and visit your doctor regularly. Take a deeper dive into any of these topics via the links at the end of this guide.



High cholesterol

The cholesterol that blocks arteries is called low-density lipoprotein, or LDL. For many men, the risk from high cholesterol starts in their 20s and increases with age. Men should aim for healthy cholesterol levels to prevent a heart attack or stroke.

Healthy cholesterol levels for men aged 20 years and older

Total cholesterol	Non-HDL cholesterol	LDL cholesterol	HDL cholesterol
125 mg/dL to 200 mg/dL	Less than 130 mg/dL	Less than 100 mg/dL	40 mg/dL or higher

Diabetes

Men develop diabetes slightly more often than women. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15.5 percent of men were estimated to have diabetes as of 2020 compared with 13.2 percent of women in the U.S. Type 2 diabetes is an impairment in the way the body regulates and uses sugar (glucose) as a fuel. This long-term (chronic) condition results in too much sugar circulating in the bloodstream.

Be aware of diabetes warning signs and symptoms that women and men have in common, for example:

- Excessive thirst and hunger
- Frequent urination (from urinary tract infections or kidney problems)
- Weight loss or gain
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing wounds
- Nausea
- Skin infections
- Darkening of skin in areas of body creases (acanthosis nigricans)
- Breath odor that is fruity, sweet or smells like acetone
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet

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High blood pressure

Nearly half of men in America have high blood pressure. This condition can cause the arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the brain to burst or become blocked. Invest in a home blood pressure kit and check your blood pressure daily. Blood pressure numbers of less than 120/80 mm Hg are considered within the normal range. If your results fall into this category, stick with heart-healthy habits like following a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. If your blood pressure exceeds the normal range, talk with your doctor about lifestyle changes and possibly drug therapy.



Heart disease

Common risk factors associated with heart disease (such as high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity) can also lead to an ischemic stroke, which happens when the arteries to your brain are narrowed or blocked.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that if millions of Americans control their high blood pressure and reduce other risk factors, they can lower death rates from heart disease and stroke, which are the first- and fifth-leading causes of death in the U.S.

The American Heart Association recommends seven lifestyle choices that reduce stroke risk:

- Be active
- Keep a healthy body weight
- Learn about your cholesterol
- Don't smoke or use smokeless tobacco
- Eat a heart-healthy diet
- Keep blood pressure healthy
- Learn about blood sugar and diabetes



Want to learn more? Review these resources for stroke symptoms, signs, prevention and support:

Men and Stroke

Understanding Your Stroke Risk

Preventing Stroke: Controlling Medical Conditions

**Preventing Stroke: Healthy Living
Stroke Treatment**

Brain Injury Association of Illinois