

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Amy L. Doneen, MSN, ARNP

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From Amy & Jeff

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Happy Spring everyone! We hope all of our mothers had a very happy Mother's Day! With it finally *looking* and *feeling* like spring, it's a great time to get outside. Go walk, run, work in the yard, or whatever makes you active. It's good for your health — and it's great for your heart!

We are grateful that May is **National Stroke Awareness Month**. It's important to give attention to this vital topic and we dedicate this issue of Heart Talk to stroke awareness and prevention. As a start, **consider these important facts about strokes:**

- The prevalence of Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIAs) increases with age.
- Up to 40 percent of all people who have experienced a TIA will go on to have an actual stroke.
- Most studies show that nearly half of all strokes occur within the first two days after a TIA.
- Within three months after a TIA, 10 to

15% of people will have a stroke.

- In the United States, stroke is the **4th leading cause of death**, killing over 133,000 people each year, and a leading cause of serious, long-term adult disability.
- Approximately 795,000 strokes will occur this year, one occurring every 40 seconds, and taking a life approximately every four minutes.
- Stroke can happen to anyone at any time, regardless of race, sex, or age.
- Approximately 55,000 more women than men have a stroke each year.
- Women are 2X more likely to die from stroke than breast cancer annually.
- African Americans have almost twice the risk of first-ever stroke compared with whites.
- Two million brain cells die every minute during stroke, increasing the risk of permanent brain damage, disability, or death.

Please share the information in this issue with those you care about. Recognizing symptoms and acting **FAST** to get medical attention can save a life and limit disabilities.

~ Amy & Jeff

F ace	Does the face look uneven?
A rm	Does one arm drift down?
S peech	Does their speech sound strange?
T ime	Call 911

What is a Stroke?

If an artery leading to the brain, or inside the brain, becomes blocked for a short period of time, the blood flow to an area of the brain slows or stops. This most often occurs as a result of a plaque rupture from within the artery wall.

When blood flow is disrupted for a short period of time and symptoms resolve, this is referred to as a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or mini-stroke.

If the symptoms are present for 24 hours or longer, it is referred to as a Stroke. Though TIAs themselves cause no permanent brain damage, they are a *serious* warning sign of a stroke to come — much like tremors that precede an earthquake — and should not be ignored!

What are the Symptoms of a TIA vs. Stroke?

The symptoms of a TIA and stroke are basically the same and may include one or more of the following symptoms:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

If you enjoy this newsletter, please pass it along to a friend or family member who may find it helpful.
www.TheHASPC.com



Mediterranean Diet

Research proves it is effective in preventing stroke. See the March/April issue of Heart Talk for details about the Mediterranean Diet.

Foods Proven to Help Prevent Strokes

There are a number of foods known to help reduce risk of stroke. Are these food represented well in *your* diet?

Whole Grains – According to a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, eating whole grains can help lower risk of ischemic stroke in women.

Citrus Fruits – An antioxidant found in citrus fruits like

oranges can help to lower risk in women according to a study of 70K women as reported in a the journal *Stroke*.



Fish – Eating fish every week can help reduce stroke according to studies published in the journal *Stroke*. Those eating fish each week have lower stroke risk than non-fish eaters.

Garlic - Garlic contains a chemical called allicin, which makes your blood less 'sticky' and less likely to clot and cause a stroke. Garlic (and onions) also help keep your blood lipid (fat) and cholesterol levels down.

Stroke strikes fast. You should too. Call 911!

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What Can You Do to Lower Your Risk of Stroke? 12 Vital Tips

1. Find out if you have atherosclerosis (plaque within your arteries) by obtaining a Carotid IMT ultrasound (available at clinics like The HASPC).

2. Enroll in an aggressive preventative program (like that available at the HASPC) to avoid becoming a statistic. Remember: stroke is preventable!

3. Know your blood pressure because high blood pressure (hypertension) is one of the leading causes of stroke. Optimal blood pressure is less than 115/75.

4. Find out if you have atrial fibrillation.

5. If you smoke, stop. Smoking doubles the risk for stroke. However, if you stop smoking today, your risk for stroke will immediately begin to drop.

6. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Heavy drinking can actually increase your risk for stroke.

7. Know your cholesterol number. Optimal is to have your Total Cholesterol/HDL ratio <3.0.

8. If you are diabetic, work with your doctor to get your blood sugar level under control.

9. Include exercise in your daily routine. Adults should perform moderate physical activities for at least 22 minutes a day. If you exercise with a friend you are more likely to make it a habit.

10. Enjoy a lower sodium (salt), lower fat diet such as the Mediterranean diet which can help to lower your blood pressure and stroke risk by as much as 30%.

11. Ask your health care provider if you have circulation (blood flow) problems that increase stroke risk. Untreated plaque in the arteries can cause stroke.

12. Periodontal therapy reduces risk.

Portions adopted from the © National Stroke Association website.

The Bottom Line: Stroke strikes FAST. You should too! Make the effort to get involved in a program of PREVENTION...don't wait for symptoms to appear. Stroke is preventable!

If you haven't yet done so, come to the HASPC for your **individual risk assessment**. If you're at risk, we will work with you to develop a comprehensive treatment plan to eliminate the risk of stroke from your future. Regardless of family history and risk factors, you do NOT have to become a statistic – **IF** you take action **NOW!**