

Strokes

Strokes are the interruption of blood flow to the brain due to a clogged or burst blood vessel. Since the blood carries oxygen to the brain, it is essential to maintaining normal body functions.

Stroke, sometimes referred to as a CVA or cerebral vascular accident, is the third leading cause of death in the United States. Statistically stroke accounts for 50% of nursing home admissions.

It is important to focus on controllable risk factors for having a stroke, in order to reduce or prevent your chances of suffering a stroke.

Are you aware of the impact you can have on your health? Health choices can prolong your life or prevent the debilitating consequences of a disease.

Controllable Risk Factors:

- High blood pressure: Have it monitored regularly. (*Available through CHAMPS office during parish nurse office hours and every first Sunday of the month at 9 and 10:30 AM*); eat DASH diet regimen and take prescribed medications.
- Tobacco use: Don't start smoking or if already addicted enter a smoking cessation program.
- Control high cholesterol: Monitor cholesterol with regular screening. (*A cholesterol/triglyceride screen will be available at a nominal cost at the CHAMPS Health Fair on Saturday, September 23. Watch for more details regarding pre-registration procedure for blood screening for this and other*

tests.)

- Excessive weight: As with so many health problems, such as stroke, heart attack or diabetes, weight control is essential to one's health. Being overweight puts a strain on the entire circulatory system and thereby increases your risk.
- Diabetes: The incidence of diabetes is rising steadily today in the entire population, including adolescents. Obesity, sedentary lifestyle and a high-fat diet are associated with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Prevention involves all members of the family through increasing physical activity and by eating a healthy diet. According to the American Diabetes Association, there are 20.8 million Americans with diabetes. Two out of three people with diabetes die from stroke or heart disease. Diabetes increases the risk of a stroke up to four times. It is important for diabetics to keep their blood sugar under control to minimize complications.
- Atrial fibrillation: An irregular heart-beat (AF) is caused by the two upper chambers of the heart beating erratically can cause blood to pool and increase the risk of stroke due to a blood clot forming and traveling to the brain. AF increases the risk of stroke up to six times. Always seek medical attention for diagnosis and treatment of irregular heartbeats.
- Alcohol use: Limit alcohol intake to no more than two drinks per day.

Some studies demonstrate more than two drinks per day increases your risk of stroke by 50%.

- Eat healthy: A lower sodium and fat content in your diet may lower the risk of a stroke. Learn more about the

DASH Diet, a balanced diet that has plenty of food to fill you up.

- Cardiac Disease: Prevention of cardiac disease is important but once diagnosed management of the disease is imperative.

Know the warning signs of a stroke:

If ANY of the following symptoms are present call 911:

Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.

Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.

Sudden trouble seeing one or both eyes.

Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.

Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Champs
Center for Healthy Aging, Ministries, Programs & Services
13271 Millard Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68137
Tel: (402) 895-2224
Website: www.champsonline.info
Email: champs@crossandheart.org

*Champs is funded by a grant from
Alegent Health Community Benefit Trust.*