

Stroke Fact Sheet

Strokes are the third leading cause of death in the United States, behind heart disease and cancer. Each year over 500,000 Americans suffer from stroke, and of those about 150,000 will die from them. Although as many as three million Americans have survived a stroke, more than two million of them have sustained some permanent disability. Strokes may occur at any age, in both sexes, and in all races in every country of the world.

What is a Stroke?

A stroke, often called a Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA) or brain attack, is a loss of blood flow to an area of the brain which may result in disorientation, further injury, or even death. When blood flow ceases, brain cells are denied vital supplies of oxygen and nutrients.

Some strokes may produce only a slightly recognizable effect, while others can quickly cause the loss of function of an arm or leg, or even death if coma results. In spite of their sudden occurrence, strokes can be prevented.

This is accomplished by managing the risk factors, heeding the warning signs, and acting quickly. Today, early diagnosis and treatment can dramatically improve recovery for stroke victims.



Risk Factors

- high blood pressure;
- cigarette smoking;
- diabetes;
- Transient Ischemic Attacks;
- atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) and other heart disease.

Prevention

- Control blood pressure and cholesterol levels;
- Stop smoking;
- Control blood sugar if diabetic;
- Maintain a healthy diet;
- Exercise regularly.