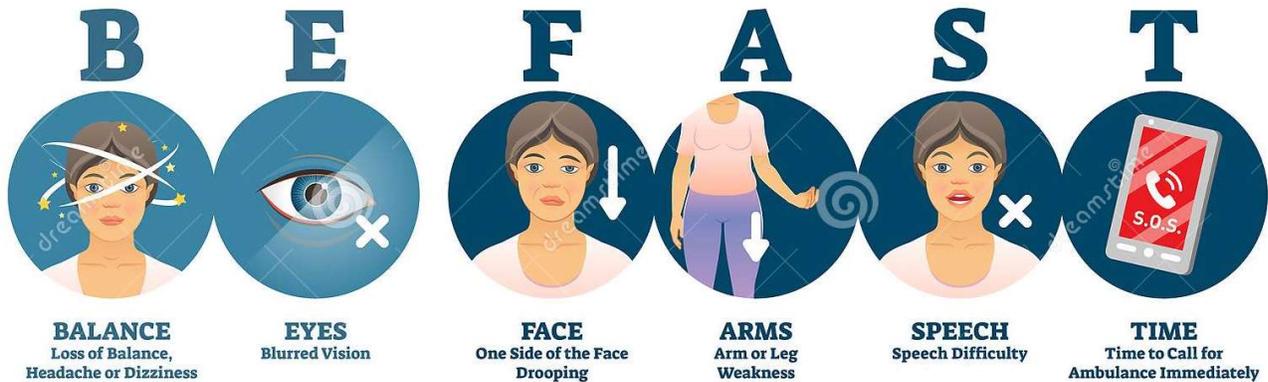


Stroke Topic: Stroke Risk Factors



Non-Modifiable

Non-modifiable risk factors are risk factors that cannot be changed, treated, or medically managed

- **Age:** For each decade of life after age 55, your chance of having a stroke more than doubles.
- **Race:** African Americans have a much higher risk for death and disability from a stroke than whites. This is partly because the African American population has a greater incidence of high blood pressure.
- **Gender:** Stroke occurs more often in men, but more women than men die from stroke.
- **History of Prior Stroke:** You are at higher risk for having a second stroke after you have already had a stroke.
- **Heredity or Genetics:** The chance of stroke is greater in people with a family history of stroke.

Modifiable

Modifiable risk factors are risk factors that can be changed, treated, or medically managed:

- **High Blood Pressure:** Blood pressure of 140/90 or higher can damage blood vessels (arteries) that supply blood to the brain.
- **Heart Disease:** Heart disease is the second most important risk factor for stroke, and the major cause of death among survivors of stroke. Heart disease and stroke have many of the same risk factors.
- **Diabetes:** People with diabetes are at greater risk for a stroke than someone without diabetes.
- **Smoking:** Smoking almost doubles your risk for an ischemic stroke.
- Birth Control Pills (Oral Contraceptives)
- **History of TIAs:** TIAs are often called mini strokes. If you have had one or more TIAs, you are almost 10 times more likely to have a stroke than someone of the same age and sex who has not had a TIA.
- **High Cholesterol:** High cholesterol levels can contribute to thickening or hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) caused by a buildup of plaque. Plaque is deposits of fatty substances, cholesterol, and calcium. Plaque buildup on the inside of the artery walls can decrease the amount of blood flow to the brain. A stroke occurs if the blood supply is cut off to the brain.
- **Obesity**
- **Sedentary Lifestyle/Lack of Exercise**
- **Excessive Alcohol Use:** More than 2 drinks per day raises your blood pressure. Binge drinking can lead to stroke.
- **Illegal Drugs:** IV (intravenous) drug abuse carries a high risk of stroke from blood clots (cerebral embolisms). Cocaine and other drugs have been closely linked to strokes, heart attacks, and many other cardiovascular problems.
- **Abnormal Heart Rhythm:** Some types of heart disease can raise your risk for stroke. Having an irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation) is the most powerful and treatable heart risk factor of stroke.



For more information about Stroke please
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