

Stroke Prevention

Modifiable Risk Factors

You can reduce your risk of having a stroke by changing lifestyle habits and modifiable risk factors, such as the following:

- **High blood pressure (Hypertension)**

- One of the most controllable risk factors for stroke, having high blood pressure increases the risk of a stroke 4-6 times. It is a contributing factor in 50 - 70% of strokes.



- **Unhealthy diet and nutrition**

- Maintaining a balanced, nutritious diet has protective qualities and helps maintain a healthy body. An unhealthy diet can contribute to the buildup of plaque (atherosclerosis), and lead to obesity, stroke or heart disease, diabetes and more.

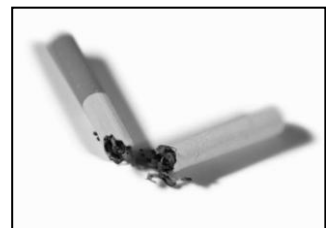


- **Lack of exercise**

- Regular physical activity is a key component to healthy living and reducing stroke risk. Stroke survivors in particular should aim to maintain their fitness level. Immobility causes the formation of blood clots in the legs of up to 75% of stroke survivors.

- **Smoking**

- Smoking is a proven health hazard that doubles the risk of stroke, by damaging blood vessel walls and increasing how hard the heart works.



- **High cholesterol (lipids)**

- Having high cholesterol increases the risk of cardiovascular disease including stroke.¹

Creating and maintaining a healthy balanced lifestyle physically, mentally and socially is important to keeping your life stroke and heart disease free.

¹ Let's Talk about Stroke: An Information Guide for Survivors and Their Families, The Heart and Stroke Foundation, 2005.

Non-modifiable risk factors include:

- **Age**
 - The older a person is, the greater chance of having a stroke
- **Gender**
 - Men have a higher risk of having a stroke than women
- **Cultural background/ethnicity**
 - People of First Nations, African and South Asian descent have higher rates of high blood pressure and diabetes
- **Family history**
 - If your family has a history of heart disease or stroke before the age of 55 (parents, grandparents, siblings and children)
- **Previous stroke or TIA**
 - Those who have had a previous stroke or a 'mini-stroke' are more likely to have another

***Help prevent a stroke!***

1. Know and control your blood pressure
2. If you smoke, quit
3. Manage your diabetes
4. Control your blood cholesterol
5. Eat a healthy, low-fat diet
6. Be physically active
7. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
8. Limit alcohol use
9. Reduce stress
10. See your doctor regularly and follow your doctor's advice.¹

