

Ageless Wellness

Health Promotion Services

NYC Department for the Aging

May 2021

ACT F.A.S.T.

May is Stroke Awareness Month. Stroke is one of the main causes of serious disability for older adults, especially those 65 and older. It is also the fourth leading cause of death in the US. It is very important to know the signs and symptoms of a stroke, and when to call 911 right away to help mitigate its impact on your health. It is also helpful to know the different types of strokes, and how to lower your risk of having one.

F.A.S.T. Stands for the major signs and symptoms of stroke, and it is an easy way to remember them. **F**ace- does the face look uneven. **A**rm- does one arm drift down? **S**peech- Does their speech sound strange, or slurred? **T**ime- to call 911 right away if you, or someone you are with shows any of these signs of stroke.

A stroke happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off due to an artery bursting, or becoming clogged by a blood clot. When blood can't flow to part of the brain, cells that don't get enough oxygen begin to die. Brain cells that are without oxygen for a short period of time, can recover. However, brain cells that have died can't be revived. The most common types of disability after a stroke include difficulty speaking, thinking, walking, weakness, or paralysis on one side.

There are two major types of stroke. The most common one is **ischemic**, and is caused by a blood clot blocking a blood vessel leading to the brain. The other type of stroke is **hemorrhagic**, which happens when a blood vessel bursts in the brain.

Often the symptoms of stroke last only a few minutes. This could be a **TIA**, or **transient ischemic attack**, which is a mini-stroke. This is can be a warning of a major stroke to come.

How to Lower Your Risk of Stroke

Control your blood pressure. Check your blood pressure often. If it is high, follow your doctor's advice to lower it.

Control your cholesterol. Large amounts of cholesterol in the blood can cause blood clots, and lead to stroke.

Stop smoking. Smoking increases your risk for a stroke.

Control your diabetes. Poorly managed diabetes can damage blood vessels, and also cause arteries to become narrowed, and lead to a stroke.

Eat healthy foods. Eating foods that are low in saturated fats and cholesterol, can help lower your risk. Try to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Physical Activity. Make physical activity a part of your life. Try to move more and sit less.

For More Information About Stroke
National Stroke Association. www.stroke.org

Department for the Aging Resource

The **Keep on Track** blood pressure webinar will train you to use a color- coded protocol that will show you how to monitor your blood pressure. Ask your center director to contact Laverne Snipes, lsnipes@aging.nyc.gov to schedule a session.

FYI: New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital will present the webinar **Life Before and After Stroke** on May 20th. Please check with your center for information on how to attend this webinar. A flyer with this information was sent to the centers by the Department for the Aging.