



# Reduce Your Risk of Stroke

## Washington Elementary School District EBT

### Take charge of your health

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is cut off, and can be caused by a number of health conditions, such as a blood clot, high blood pressure, clogged arteries or heart disease. Many factors can contribute to your risk of having a stroke. While age and genetics play a large role, your overall health and well-being greatly determine your risk. The good news is that those factors are in your hands.

### Start protecting yourself today

Whether or not the chance of stroke runs in your family, you should monitor and maintain your health to prevent high risk of having a stroke. Here are seven ways you can start reducing your risk today.



**Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight and its resulting impact on your health greatly increases your chance of having a stroke. You can take simple steps to lower your weight: reduce your daily calorie intake and increase your physical activity. Everything from walking to golfing to housework can add more activity to your day.



**Exercise—more.** Moderate intensity exercise at least 30 minutes per day, five days a week, has been shown to reduce stroke risk. Even if you can't commit to a full 30 minutes, try 10- to 15-minute increments of activities. Taking a walk around your block or joining a gym with friends are great ways to fit in physical activity.



**Drink in moderation.** Studies show that having one drink a day can actually lower your risk of stroke. A five-ounce glass of wine, 12-ounce beer or one-and-a-half-ounce glass of hard liquor are standard sizes.



**Treat heart conditions.** If you experience any irregularity in your heart function, make sure you seek professional treatment and take care of your condition daily. Heart palpitations, irregular heartbeat or shortness of breath can indicate a possible blood clot that can travel to the brain and cause a stroke. You'll want to take extra care in monitoring your symptoms if you have any history of a heart condition.



**Watch your blood sugar.** If you have high blood sugar, you may be more likely to suffer from blood clots, especially if you're diagnosed with diabetes. You should closely monitor your blood sugar, with help from your doctor. A healthy diet and fitness routine can also help you regulate your blood sugar.



**Stop smoking.** Tobacco cessation is one of the most powerful lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk of stroke. If you struggle with quitting, speak to your doctor about cessation aids, such as patches, pills or other medications. If you have a friend, family member or coworker who smokes, make a pact to quit together for motivation. Most importantly, don't despair if it takes a few tries.



**Lower your blood pressure.** High blood pressure can double or even quadruple your stroke risk—if not controlled. If you have high blood pressure, you can take the following steps to treat your condition:

- Reduce your salt intake
- Avoid high-cholesterol foods, like burgers, butter and bacon
- Exercise more often
- Quit smoking
- Take blood pressure medication, if needed

Routine checkups and self-monitoring can help you if you struggle with high blood pressure.

By maintaining a healthy lifestyle and regularly monitoring your well-being, you can reduce your risk of stroke and enjoy life to its fullest.



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