Stroke 101

A stroke is a “brain attack,” cutting off vital blood flow and oxygen to the brain. In the United States, stroke is the third leading cause of death. A stroke can happen to anyone at any time, regardless of race, sex or age.

There are two types of stroke. Ischemic stroke occurs when arteries are blocked by blood clots or by the gradual build-up of plaque and other fatty deposits. About 87 percent of all strokes are ischemic. Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain breaks leaking blood into the brain. Hemorrhagic strokes account for thirteen percent of all strokes, yet are responsible for more than thirty percent of all stroke deaths.

Two million brain cells die every minute during stroke, increasing risk of permanent brain damage, disability or death. Recognizing symptoms and acting fast to get medical attention can save a life and limit disabilities.

Few Americans know the symptoms of stroke. Learning them—and acting FAST when they occur—could save your life or the life of a loved one. Remember that Stroke Strikes Fast. You Should too. Call 9-1-1.

Common stroke symptoms include:

• Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg—especially on one side of the body.
• Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding,
• Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes,
• Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination,
• Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Use the F.A.S.T. test for recognizing and responding to stroke symptoms:

F = FACE
Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A = ARMS
Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S = SPEECH
Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

T = TIME
If you observe any of these signs, it’s time to call 9-1-1 or get to the nearest stroke center or hospital.

Everyone has some stroke risk. Adopting healthy behaviors while still in college can provide you with long term health benefits including lessening the risk of stroke. Here's what you can do now: know your blood pressure, stop smoking, drink alcohol in moderation (no more than one drink/day), reduce stress, get regular exercise and eat a healthy diet.

Food for thought. The diet industry makes over $40 billion dollars each year. That would build 2.5 Habitat for Humanity homes for each of the 2.5 million homeless people living in the United States.

Ready to Celebrate Healthy Weight Week?

According to Francie M. Berg, a licensed nutritionist and professor at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine, Healthy Weight Week “is a time to celebrate healthy diet-free living habits that last a lifetime and prevent eating and weight problems. Our bodies cannot be shaped at will. But we can all be accepting, healthy and happy at our natural weights.”

Healthy Weight Week is celebrated during the third week of January each year. Healthy Weight Week was chosen because many people make New Year’s resolutions to diet and have found that they have been unable to stick with their plan. It is important to learn how to love and honor the body that you do have. Human bodies are very complex and have adapted to resist starvation. Yet thousands of products bombard us everyday telling us we can be skinny. As if skinny is a cure for everything.

Diet’s don’t work. Whether it’s high or low carb, pills, shakes, etc. Those that have been researched show a 3-5% success rate. That’s why you always see the “results not typical” phrase in ads. Instead, diets often cause nutrient deficiencies, food preocupation, dysfunctional eating, increase the risk of eating disorders and create a serious decrease in self esteem.

Set your mind to be healthy, not skinny, they are not the same thing. Have you ever held off on doing something until you lose a few pounds? If you have, you know that in the long run this practice only causes negative feelings. Decide now to never allow weight to determine your self worth.

Chances are you do make lots of healthy eating choices. Challenge yourself to add one new healthy choice every few weeks, like swapping out a sweet for a piece of fruit each day. Once that change becomes a habit make a new one.

Examine your own beliefs about “sizism.” We live in a society where the overweight are stereotyped as stupid, lazy and unhealthy. We are surrounded by brands that purposefully do not sell their clothing in sizes that fit overweight people. Do you want to support brands that do that?

There is actually a big debate amongst researchers as to whether there are health risks related to obesity (research shows correlation, not causation). Since most weight loss is not long-term there is not much in the way of evidence to prove that weight loss will reduce these risks.

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Antibiotics: You May Not Need a Pill For That

When you feel sick you will do anything you can to feel better. Many people associate taking pills with feeling better and get disappointed when their health care providers won’t give them a prescription. However, antibiotics only work on bacterial infections and do nothing to shorten the length of a viral-caused illness.

In fact, taking antibiotics when unnecessary is actually harmful to you. Common infections that were once easily treatable with antibiotics are now becoming harder to cure and may require the use of more toxic and more expensive medications.

Examination, everyday you take an antibiotic you are also killing off the good bacteria that live inside you. This is why yeast infections and diarrhea are commonly experienced when on antibiotics. Some illnesses have both viral and bacterial causes. Have you ever had the same symptoms as a friend and they got pills and you didn’t?

Virus infections (Sinusitis) are most often caused by virus and are rarely bacterial. A sore throat is most often a symptom of a cold, which is caused by a virus. Some sore throats, like strep throat can be caused by bacteria. Your health care provider can do a test to determine this.

Ear infections have a variety of causes, antibiotics are not always necessary. Bronchitis rarely requires antibiotics. The common cold will not get better with antibiotics.

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You’ll also have access to additional information and sources to learn more.

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