

Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of adult disability in the US. The good news is that in many cases stroke is preventable: by being aware that stroke can affect you and your loved ones, and by knowing and addressing your personal risk factors ahead of time, you can dramatically reduce your chances of suffering a stroke.

Step 1: Know Your Risk

The first step in preventing stroke is to know your risk level. See [Am I At Risk For Stroke?](#) to calculate your personal stroke risk. Knowing your risk will motivate you to start making the necessary changes to prevent stroke later in life, and will help you and your doctor decide how aggressively to monitor and treat your risk factors.

Step 2: Identify and Control Your Risk Factors

No matter what your risk level is, you can benefit from changes to reduce your stroke risk. Over the course of a lifetime, the most important way to prevent stroke is identifying which stroke risk factors you have and getting them under control through lifestyle changes and, if necessary, medication.

For information on all the stroke risk factors, how they affect a woman's risk of stroke, and what you can do about them, browse the topics on the left hand side of this page.

If you're unsure where to start in assessing your risk factors, see the list below from the National Stroke Association's guide to preventing stroke:¹

1. Know your [blood pressure](#)
2. Find out if you have [atrial fibrillation](#)
3. Quit [smoking](#)
4. Drink alcohol in moderation
5. Know your [cholesterol](#)

6. Control your [diabetes](#)
7. Get daily [exercise](#)
8. Eat a healthy [diet](#)
9. Control any [other cardiovascular diseases](#) you have

Step 3: Know the Signs of Stroke

By developing and carrying out a proper stroke prevention plan with you doctor, you can drastically lower your chances of having a stroke. Make sure you and those around you know the [signs of stroke](#) and [what to do](#) if you notice them in yourself and others. If you have followed a prevention plan properly you will reduce your risk of having another stroke. If you take preventive steps but experience a stroke anyway, it is likely to be much less severe than it would have been otherwise, and with prompt treatment many people are able to live a long, happy life after a stroke.

By paying attention to the signs of a [transient ischemic attack \(TIA\)](#) or mini-stroke, you can get the medical attention you need before a full-blown stroke occurs.

For More Information

National Stroke Association Prevention Guide

<http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=PREGUIDE#1>

References

1. Gorelick PB, Sacco RL, Smith DB, et al. Prevention of a First Stroke: A Review of Guidelines and a Multidisciplinary Consensus Statement From the National Stroke Association. *JAMA*. March 24, 1999;281(12):1112-1120.

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