

HEALTH MATTERS

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Stroke Awareness Month:

May is Stroke Awareness Month, a time to learn the signs of stroke, understand the risks, and take proactive steps to protect your health and the health of your loved ones. Every second counts during a stroke and recognizing the symptoms early can mean the difference between recovery and lifelong disability or even death.

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of long-term disability. But the good news is, up to 80% of strokes are preventable.

Reducing your risk of stroke starts with managing your blood pressure, the leading cause of stroke. A heart-healthy diet is also essential. Focus on foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium, while increasing your intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Regular physical activity, such as 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days, helps maintain a healthy weight and supports cardiovascular health.

If you smoke, quitting is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your risk, as smoking damages blood

vessels and increases the likelihood of clot formation. It's also important to limit alcohol consumption, since excessive drinking can raise blood pressure and contribute to other stroke-related risks.

Lastly, make a habit of knowing your numbers and regularly monitor your cholesterol, blood sugar, and weight, and partner with your healthcare provider to manage any concerns.

During Stroke Awareness Month, take the time to educate yourself and those around you. By acting quickly and making healthy choices, we can all help reduce the impact of stroke in our communities.

Visit elih.stonybrookmedicine.edu
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Long Island Hospital.

One of the most important tools in recognizing a stroke is the acronym BE FAST. Each letter represents a key symptom to watch for:

- B – Balance** Sudden loss of balance or coordination, dizziness, or trouble walking.
- E – Eyes** Sudden changes in vision, such as blurred or double vision or loss of vision in one or both eyes.
- F – Face** Facial drooping on one side. Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face appear uneven or droopy?
- A – Arms** Sudden weakness or numbness in one arm. Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?
- S – Speech** Slurred or garbled speech. Can the person repeat a simple sentence correctly?
- T – Time** If you notice any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately. Time lost is brain lost.