

MAY IS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

Stroke is the #1 cause of long term disability affecting over 750,000 Americans a year. A stroke occurs when blood vessel(s) suddenly burst or become blocked causing the oxygen supply to the brain to be cut off which results in the death of certain brain cells. This article is aimed at providing you with information about risk factors and warning signs of stroke. There are some risk factors over which you have no control – age, sex, heredity, race and prior stroke or heart attack. The **majority** of risk factors can be **decreased** through appropriate medical care, diet and exercise. The **major risk factors*** of stroke are:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Heart disease
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Excess alcohol intake
- Obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Diabetes
- Stress

You can decrease your risk of having a stroke by modifying your risk factors. In addition, you can become knowledgeable about the warning signs of stroke and, if necessary, seek immediate medical attention if you experience one or more **warning signs***:

- Sudden weakness, numbness or paralysis of face, arm or leg
- Sudden loss of speech or trouble talking
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eye(s)
- Sudden severe headache
- Sudden unexplained dizziness, loss of balance or trouble walking

You can decrease your risk of stroke by modifying your risk factors and decrease the risk of long term disability by seeking medical attention if you experience a warning sign(s). Promote awareness by sharing this article with your family and friends.

*America Stroke Association – for more information call 1-888-4-STROKE.