

# How to Reduce Your Risk of Another Stroke

## Know the Signs and Symptoms of a Stroke

Make sure you and members of your care circle (family, friends or others close to you) know stroke signs and symptoms.

Symptoms may last a short time and disappear. Do not delay in getting help. A stroke is a medical emergency.

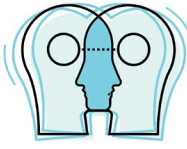
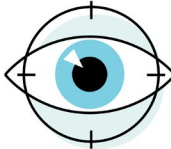




**Call 911 if you have any of the signs or symptoms at the right.**

## Stroke Risk

Your risk for another stroke is higher if you have any of the following risk factors:

- diabetes
- high cholesterol
- high blood pressure
- atrial fibrillation
- physical inactivity
- extra weight
- tobacco use.

There are actions you can take today to control your risk factors.

	<b>B</b>	Balance – Sudden difficulty with balance
	<b>E</b>	Eyes – Sudden problems with vision in one or both eyes
	<b>F</b>	Face – Face or smile droops on one side
	<b>A</b>	Arms – Sudden weakness in arm or leg
	<b>S</b>	Speech – Unable to repeat a simple sentence, or slurred words
	<b>T</b>	Time – If you observe any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately

BE FAST was developed by Intermountain Healthcare, as an adaptation of the FAST model implemented by the American Stroke Association. Reproduced with permission from Intermountain Healthcare. Copyright 2011, Intermountain Health Care.

**Watch for the “BEFAST” symptoms and call 911 right away if you have any of those symptoms.**

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## Take Your Medicine as Directed

You may take one or more of the following medicines to reduce your stroke risk.

### **Antiplatelet medicine**

This medicine prevents platelets (part of your blood) from sticking together. This can help prevent blood clots from forming and causing a stroke.

### **Anticoagulant medicine (blood thinners)**

This medicine slows down the clotting of your blood. This can help prevent blood clots from forming and causing a stroke.

### **Diabetes medicine**

This medicine helps control blood glucose levels.

### **Cholesterol medicine (statins)**

This medicine lowers the cholesterol in your blood.

### **High blood pressure medicine**

This medicine helps control high blood pressure.

Tell your health care provider about all the medicines you take (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and vitamins). If you miss a dose, use the medicine as soon as you can.

## Manage Diabetes

Your stroke risk increases if you have diabetes. Keep your hemoglobin A1c test results under 7 percent. To do this:

- follow your health care provider's treatment plan and take your medicine as directed
- get regular exercise
- eat a variety of healthful foods
- maintain a healthy weight.

## Reach Your Cholesterol Goals

Low density lipoprotein cholesterol is also called LDL (the "bad" cholesterol). When too much LDL builds up on your artery walls, plaque (a fatty substance) forms and blocks blood flow to your heart, legs and brain. This can cause a stroke.

Keep your LDL less than 70. To do this:

- follow your health care provider's treatment plan and take your medicine as directed
- get regular exercise
- eat a variety of healthful foods
- maintain a healthy weight.

## Reach Your Blood Pressure Goals

High blood pressure (hypertension) puts stress on your blood vessel walls. This can cause blood clots or bleeding and lead to a stroke.

Keep your blood pressure less than 130/80. To do this:

- follow your health care provider's treatment plan and take your medicine as directed
- get regular exercise
- eat a variety of healthful foods
- eat no more than 1,500 milligrams of salt (sodium) each day
- maintain a healthy weight.

## Get Regular Exercise

Lack of exercise increases your stroke risk. It also increases your risk for diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

Exercise 5 days a week for at least 30 minutes each day. You can spread the 30 minutes throughout the day or do it all at once. Good options include walking, swimming, dancing and biking. If you do not exercise, talk with your health care provider before you start.

## Quit Using Tobacco Products

Tobacco use increases your stroke risk. It damages blood vessels, lowers oxygen levels in your blood, makes plaque (a fatty substance) form more quickly, raises your blood pressure and makes your heart work harder.

If you use tobacco products, stop. Ask your health care provider for information about how to quit using tobacco products.