



## Stroke

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# Men and Stroke

## Acting F.A.S.T. is Key to Stroke Survival



### FACE

Does one side of the face droop when smiling?



### ARMS

Does one arm drift downward when both arms are raised?



### SPEECH

Is speech slurred or strange when repeating a simple phrase?



### TIME

If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

Acting F.A.S.T. is key to stroke survival. **Face:** Does one side of the face droop when smiling? **Arms:** Does one arm drift downward when both arms are raised? **Speech:** Is speech slurred or strange when repeating a simple phrase? **Time:** If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

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**Stroke is a leading cause of death in men.**<sup>1</sup> Stroke is also a leading cause of long-term disability,<sup>2</sup> and men under age 44 are hospitalized for certain types of stroke at a higher rate than women in the same age group.<sup>3</sup>

**These facts are alarming, but there is good news: About 4 in 5 strokes are preventable.**<sup>4</sup> That's why it's important to know your risk for stroke and [take action to protect your health](#). And you can [learn more](#) about how CDC and its partners are leading programs to help men reduce their risk of stroke.

## What is a stroke?

A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, happens when blood flow to an area of the brain is blocked or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. When brain cells are starved of oxygen, they die.

Stroke is a medical emergency. It's important to act F.A.S.T and get treatment as soon as possible (see sidebar). Call 9-1-1 right away if you or someone you are with shows any signs of having a stroke.

Some treatments for stroke work only if given within the first 3 hours after symptoms start. A delay in treatment increases the risk of permanent brain damage or death.

## What puts men at risk for stroke?

**High blood pressure**, also called **hypertension**, is a major risk factor for stroke.

Half of men (50.4%) have high blood pressure greater than or equal to 130/80 mm Hg or are taking medicine for their blood pressure.<sup>5</sup> Four out of 5 men with high blood pressure do not have their blood pressure controlled.<sup>5</sup>

Other **risk factors for stroke** include the following:

- **Smoking** damages blood vessels, which can cause a stroke. About 1 in 7 men smoke.<sup>6</sup> Men are also more likely to be smokers than women are.<sup>7</sup>
- **Overweight and obesity.** Having overweight or obesity increases stroke risk. About 3 in 4 men in the United States have overweight or obesity.<sup>8</sup>
- **Diabetes** increases stroke risk because it can harm blood vessels in the brain. About 1 in 7 men have diabetes.<sup>9</sup>
- **Too much alcohol.** Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure levels and increase the risk for stroke. It also increases levels of triglycerides, a form of fat in your blood that can harden your arteries. Men are more likely than women to drink too much alcohol.<sup>10</sup>
- **Not enough physical activity.** Not getting enough physical activity can lead to other health conditions that can raise the risk for stroke. In 2017, about half of men met the guidelines for aerobics and muscle strengthening.<sup>6</sup>

## Why are African American men at higher risk for stroke?



Active and healthy, Adrian thought he was the last person who needed to think about stroke. But Adrian did not realize that he had an increased risk of stroke due to family history. [Read Adrian's story.](#)

- More than 1 in 2 African American men have a blood pressure greater than or equal to 130/80 mm Hg or are taking medicine to control their blood pressure.<sup>11</sup>
- About 1 in 9 African American men have been diagnosed with **diabetes**, and many more have the disease but do not know it.<sup>9</sup>

- **Sickle cell disease**, a common genetic disorder in African Americans, can lead to a stroke. About 1 in 365 African American babies are born with sickle cell disease.<sup>12</sup>
- About 1 in 5 African American men **smoke**.<sup>13</sup>
- About 7 in 10 African American men have **overweight or obesity**.<sup>8</sup>
- U.S. adults, including African Americans, consume more than the recommended amounts of salt or sodium, which raises blood pressure and increases the risk for stroke.

## Why are Hispanic men at risk for stroke?

- About half of Hispanic men have a blood pressure greater than or equal to 130/80 mm Hg or are taking medicine to lower blood pressure—a major risk factor for stroke.<sup>11</sup>
- About 1 in 7 Hispanic men have been diagnosed with **diabetes**, and many more have the disease but do not know it. Diabetes is also more common in people of Mexican and Puerto Rican ancestry than in people of Cuban or Central/South American ancestry.<sup>9</sup>
- About 1 in 7 Hispanic men **smoke**.<sup>14</sup>
- More than 4 in 5 Hispanic men have **overweight or obesity**.<sup>8</sup>

## How can I prevent stroke?



Strong men put their health first. [Learn about heart health](#) and share what you know with your friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

Most strokes can be prevented by keeping medical conditions under control and making healthy lifestyle changes:

[Know your ABCS](#) of heart and brain health:

- **Aspirin:** Aspirin may help reduce your risk for stroke by preventing blood clots, but you should check with your doctor before taking aspirin to make sure it is right for you.
- **Blood pressure:** Control your blood pressure with healthy lifestyle changes (see below). If a blood pressure medicine is prescribed, take it as directed. Learn more about [blood pressure](#).
- **Cholesterol:** Manage your blood cholesterol with healthy lifestyle changes. If a cholesterol medicine is prescribed, take it as directed. Learn more about [cholesterol](#).
- **Smoking:** Don't start smoking. If you do smoke, [learn how to quit](#).

Make lifestyle changes:

- **Eat healthy:** Choose healthy foods, including foods with less salt, or sodium, to lower your blood pressure and foods that are rich in fiber and whole grains to manage your cholesterol. Learn more about [healthy eating basics](#) from ChooseMyPlate.gov, as well as small steps you can take to [boost your healthy eating habits](#) from the “Live to the Beat” campaign.
- **Get regular physical activity:** Regular physical activity helps you reach and maintain a healthy weight and keeps your heart and blood vessels healthier. Adults age 18 and older should get at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of physical activity each week and do muscle strengthening activities on 2 or more days each week.<sup>13</sup> Find [inspiration and tips for getting regular physical activity](#) from the “Live to the Beat” campaign.

Work with your health care team:

- **Talk to your doctor** about your chances of having a stroke, including your age and whether anyone in your family has had a stroke. Learn how to [find the right doctor for you](#) from the “Live to the Beat” campaign and how to make small steps toward heart-healthy living from the “[Start Small. Live Big.](#)” campaign.
- **Get other health conditions under control**, such as diabetes or heart disease.

## What is CDC doing about stroke?

CDC and its partners are leading national initiatives and programs to reduce rates of death and disability caused by stroke and to help women live longer, healthier lives.

CDC’s [Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention](#) (DHDSP) provides resources to all 50 states to address heart disease and stroke and helps lead or support the following:

- The [WISEWOMAN](#) program provides low-income, underinsured, or uninsured women with chronic disease risk factor screening, lifestyle programs, and referral services in an effort to prevent heart disease and strokes.
- The [Paul Coverdell National Acute Stroke Program](#) funds states to reduce death and disabilities from stroke.
- The [Million Hearts](#)<sup>®</sup> initiative, which is co-led by CDC and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, works with other federal agencies and private-sector partners to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke and prevent attacks and strokes.

## Related Stroke Survivor Stories



### Family History and Stroke: Adrian Cushenberry

A fitness enthusiast, Adrian thought he was the last person who needed to worry about stroke. But he didn’t know a genetic predisposition put him at risk.



### Lifestyle Changes After Stroke: Charles Stanley

Charles didn’t realize that African American men have an increased risk for stroke compared to White men. Charles had a stroke when he was just 52.



## Managing Chronic Conditions: Clark Caffall

Stroke can happen to anyone at any time. Be sure to get your annual checkup to learn about your risk factors and how to minimize them.

More information

CDC

- [High Blood Pressure](#)
- [Men and Heart Disease](#)
- [Salt](#)
- [Cholesterol](#)

## Million Hearts<sup>®</sup> and CDC Foundation

- [“Start Small. Live Big.”](#) This campaign encourages adults 55 and older, to get back on track with the small steps—like scheduling their medical appointments, getting active, and eating healthy—so they can get back to living big.
- [“Live to the Beat.”](#) This campaign focuses on empowering Black adults to pursue heart-healthy lifestyles on their own terms—to find what works best individually and consistently—as they live to their own beat.



## Other Organizations

- American Stroke Association (ASA): [About Stroke](#)
  - ASA Resources in Spanish: [Recursos en Español](#)
- National, Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: [Stroke](#)
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS): [Stroke Information Page](#)
  - [NINDS Know Stroke Campaign](#)
  - [NINDS Know Stroke Campaign Spanish Toolkit](#)

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