

Stroke sudden loss of brain function

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of flow of blood to the brain (Ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels in the brain (Hemorrhagic stroke). The interruption of blood flow or the rupture of blood vessels causes brain cells (Neurons) in the affected area to die. The effects of a stroke depend on where the brain was injured, as well as how much damage occurred. A stroke can impact any number of areas including our ability to

move, see, remember, speak, reason and read and write.

In a small number of cases, stroke-like damage to the brain can occur when the heart stops (cardiac arrest). The longer the brain goes without the oxygen and nutrients supplied by the blood flow, the greater the risk of permanent brain damage. Brain injuries can also result in uncontrolled bleeding and permanent brain damage. This is usually referred to as an Acquired Brain Injury.

Poor lifestyle choices increases heart risk

Many health conditions arise as a result of lifestyle choices such as poor diet or negative behaviours: smoking or excessive drinking. Others are the result of genetics, like being born with defect.

Controllable factors that are associated with heart failure include smoking, poor diet (particularly eating foods that have high in cholesterol), lack of exercise, and being overweight. In other words, any of those conditions only increase a person's risk of heart failure.

They can also manifest themselves in several different ways:

- Coronary Artery Disease: when cholesterol and fatty deposits build up in heart arteries, lessening the amount of blood that reaches the heart, forcing it to work harder as a result.

- Hypertension: also known as high blood pressure, increases a person's risk of developing heart failure by two to three times. Hypertension occurs from too much stress, be it work – or family – related.

- A way to relive stress is through regular exercise. People who do not exercise regularly increase their risk of hypertension, and in doing so, their risk of heart failure.

- Lung disease: when the lungs are not functioning properly, it causes the heart to work that much more to get oxygen to the rest of the body. Smoking increases the risk of lung disease, which then increases the risk of heart failure.

Effects of a stroke

Each stroke is different. How well you recover from a stroke depends upon many factors, including how much and what parts of your brain were damaged and your health before the stroke. The work you do with your stroke rehabilitation team and the support from family and friends are also important to your recovery.

A stroke damages the brain and causes a sudden loss of brain function. Because your brain controls everything you say, do and think a stroke can have a lot of different effects.

Stroke prevention

You can't control your family history, age, gender or ethnicity. But luckily, you can do something about other factors that could increase your risk of having a stroke such as obesity, diet, diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

Stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells begin to die. If blood supply is not restored, the effected part of the brain dies, causing disability and death.

Help prevent a stroke by learning more about the risk factors you can do something about and those you can't control.

Risk issues you can do something about.

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High blood cholesterol
- Heart disease atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Being overweight
- Excessive alcohol consumption

• Physical inactivity
• Smoking
• Stress
Woman's unique issues
Women are living longer, healthier lives then ever be-

fore. That's why it's even more important today to prevent the leading causes of death among Canadian women: heart disease and stroke. In fact, according to Statistics Canada (2003), the number of deaths from heart disease and stroke is now virtually the same between women and men:

36,823 versus 37,004.

While most of the risk factors, signs and symptoms are the same in women as they are in men, there are unique aspects to women's heart health that you should know:
• Estrogen • Birth control pills • Pregnancy • Menopause • Cholesterol • Triglycerides • Heart attack



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