

STROKE

Stroke or Cerebro Vascular Accident occurs when blood supply to part of the brain is disrupted causing brain cells to die. Blood flow to the brain can be compromised by a variety of mechanisms including:

- Narrowing of the arteries in the brain due to cholesterol plaque formation, i.e., atherosclerosis;
- Hardening of the arteries;
- Clot migration from the heart to the brain in conditions such as irregular heartbeat, e.g., atrial fibrillation;
- Rupture of an artery in the brain.

Stroke risk factors include:

- High blood pressure, sometimes referred to as the “Silent Killer;”
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking

In addition to causing death, stroke is a major cause of long-term disability and suffering for individuals and their families. Most strokes result in serious disabilities or death because individuals are not aware of the signs and symptoms of stroke, which results in delayed treatment.

The purpose of this message is to impart an awareness of the top five (5) facts on strokes that one should be cognizant of as outlined by Dr. Sinatra’s complimentary online “Heart, Health, and Nutrition, A Cardiologist’s Guide to Total Wellness”. Per Dr. Sinatra, some strokes do not show the clinical symptoms such as limb weakness, droopy facial muscles, a sudden headache, vertigo or dizziness, or changes in conscious level. According to Dr. Sinatra, anyone can recognize stroke by remembering the first four (4) letters in the word, “stroke.” Ask an individual to --

- S: SMILE.
- T: TALK.
- R: RAISE both arms.
- O: Stick OUT their tongue.

The last, newest sign is critical. When the individual sticks out their tongue, note if the tongue is straight or crooked; if it falls to one side or the other, rather than sticking straight out. If a person has trouble with any one of the above tasks, it can be indicative of a stroke. Call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher or if you are at the AFRH, notify the Wellness Center. This measure will avoid delay of treatment for stroke victims.

The lessons to learn to prevent a stroke are:

- Know your blood pressure. Take your blood pressure medications as prescribed and on time. Reduce your salt intake and if overweight, reduce your weight.
- Check your cholesterol levels. Take your cholesterol medications as prescribed and on time. Avoid a high-cholesterol diet. Instead, eat an abundance of vegetables, fruits, and grains. If overweight, reduce your weight.
- Stop smoking.
- Watch your diet and exercise.
- Check with your primary provider at regular intervals or as scheduled.