

How to reduce your risk. Smoking, lack of exercise, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are all factors that can contribute to heart disease. Stop smoking, check your blood pressure regularly, limit the amount of fat and salt that you eat and exercise regularly.

Heavy Alcohol Consumption – Heavy alcohol consumption can also contribute to stroke.

How to reduce your risk. If you drink, limit the amount of alcohol that you consume to maintain your overall health.

If you believe you're at risk for a stroke, please talk to your family physician.

If you start to experience any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately and ask to go to the Stroke Center at Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines.



Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines has received the Gold Seal of Approval™ from The Joint Commission, the nation's predominant standards – setting and accrediting body in health care. The Joint Commission's comprehensive accreditation process evaluates an organization's compliance with these standards and other accreditation requirements. Joint Commission accreditation is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards. For more information about The Joint Commission, please visit www.jointcommission.org.



RUAN NEUROSCIENCE CENTER

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What You Need To Know About Stroke



Excellence.
Every Day in Every Way.™

Picture your favorite moments in life – family gatherings, an evening out with friends, or maybe working in your garden.

Now imagine them gone instantly.

Each year, this becomes a reality for more than 800,000 Americans. A stroke robbed them of the precious things in life. But, it didn't have to happen.

3-Hour Window

A stroke, or “brain attack,” begins when a brain artery or an artery leading to the brain becomes blocked or bursts. This disrupts blood flow to a part of the brain. If blood cannot get to the brain for as little as four to six minutes, brain cells stop working and can begin to die.

You have 3 hours to seek treatment from the time you start to experience stroke symptoms. Treatment by a stroke specialist within three hours gives you a greater chance for survival and decreased chance of becoming disabled.

If you start to experience any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately and ask to go to the Stroke Center at Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines:

- A sudden, severe headache with no apparent cause
- Sudden blurred vision, or decreased vision, in one or both eyes
- Sudden weakness or numbness in your face, arm or leg on one side of your body
- Trouble speaking or understanding simple statements
- Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

Controllable Risk Factors

Strokes generally build from risk factors that are ignored over time – factors that, in most cases, can be controlled if you pay attention to your health. Here are several major controllable risk factors for stroke and ways that you can lower your risk for having a stroke.

High Blood Pressure – Do you know your blood pressure? High blood pressure is one of the leading factors for stroke. Have your blood pressure checked regularly.

120/80 Good
139/89 Pre-hypertension
140/90 High Blood Pressure

How to reduce your risk. If you have high blood pressure, there are medications that your physician can prescribe that will help you lower it. Also, eat a well-balanced diet that includes food low in fat and salt. If you are overweight, work to lose the extra pounds, and exercise for at least 30 minutes four to six times each week. If you do not regularly exercise, consult your physician before beginning an exercise program.

Diabetes – About 20 percent of people who have diabetes end up having strokes. Blood sugar should be below 100.

How to reduce your risk. Consult your physician to keep your diabetes in check. Research shows that persons who control their diabetes have lower chances of having a stroke.

Smoking – If you smoke, you are damaging your blood vessel walls, making your heart work harder and increasing your blood pressure, all which are factors that can lead to stroke.

How to reduce your risk. If you currently smoke, stop. Once you have been smoke-free for five years, your risk for stroke is the same as someone who never smoked. If you need help to stop smoking, Mercy offers a smoking cessation program in conjunction with the American Lung Association and the Iowa Heart Center.

High Cholesterol – Having high cholesterol puts you at greater risk for heart disease, which can increase your stroke risk. HDL and LDL cholesterol should fall below 200.

How to reduce your risk. Diet, exercise and taking certain cholesterol-lowering medications.

Heart Disease – Heart disease places extra strain on your heart to pump blood throughout your body. If blood cannot circulate efficiently, it can pool and form blood clots. These clots can block arteries and trigger a stroke.

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