

Risk Factors for Stroke



Certain health and lifestyle issues—called risk factors—increase your chances of having a stroke. The biggest risk factor for stroke is high blood pressure. But there are many other factors that also put you at risk. The list below can help you identify which risk factors you have. That way, you know where you need to make healthy changes. Talk with your healthcare provider about ways to help reduce your risk factors.

What are your risk factors?

Risk factors are different for each person. Check off the factors that apply to you. Keep in mind that some factors, such as your age, can't be changed. But others can be managed.

Health risk factors

- ☐ You have high blood pressure.
- ☐ You're overweight.
- ☐ You have unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- ☐ You have atrial fibrillation.
- ☐ You have atrial flutter.
- ☐ You've had a heart attack.
- ☐ You have narrowed arteries.
- ☐ You have diabetes.
- ☐ You are a man.
- ☐ You are an African American.
- ☐ You are an Alaska Native.
- ☐ You are an American Indian.

Lifestyle risk factors

- ☐ You rarely exercise.
- ☐ You often eat salty, fried, or greasy foods.
- ☐ You smoke.
- ☐ You have more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day.

Age and family history

- ☐ You're over age 60.
- ☐ A parent, brother, or sister has had a stroke.

Metabolic syndrome

Any of the factors above may put you at increased risk for stroke. But having 3 or more of 5 certain risk factors raises your risk more. This is a condition called metabolic syndrome. These factors include:

- Too much weight around your waist (or apple shaped body)
- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar
- Low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol levels
- High levels of triglycerides

If you're a woman, your risks may also include polycystic ovary syndrome.

If you have any of these risk factors, be sure to talk with your provider about how to decrease your risk of stroke and improve your overall health.

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