

The Brain Buzz

A UAMS NEWSLETTER FOR STROKE SURVIVORS
AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

Need Some Support?

Each week, stroke survivor Molly Schwarz visits patients at UAMS on H8 that have had a stroke. If you are interested in having her visit with you to share her experience and provide support, please let your nurse know.



Molly Schwarz

Tips to Help Prevent Another Stroke

By Archana Hinduja, MD

Having a stroke means that you have a greater risk for another (or recurrent) stroke. Approximately one quarter of the 795,000 strokes that occur each year are recurrent strokes.

High blood pressure is the most common cause of a stroke but only 72% of patients with high blood pressure are aware of this diagnosis. And only 35% have their blood pressure under control.

One out of five stroke patients have confessed to the use of illicit drugs when they are admitted after having a stroke. Strokes from drug abuse usually occur in young adults, and this can lead to severe disability.

Stroke is preventable, treatable and beatable; but only with your help! Some easy tips to prevent the next stroke are:

1. Follow your doctor's and pharmacist's advice regarding medications. Do not skip your medications without their advice.
2. Monitor your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol often. Keep a diary of your levels and do your best to keep them under control. Follow up with your primary care physician periodically.
3. Consume diets rich in vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy products. Limit salt intake.
4. Get involved in aerobic physical activity or an exercise program based on your ability recommended by your physical therapist.
5. Limit alcohol consumption.



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Substance Abuse and Strokes

By Archana Hinduja, MD

Treatment of strokes has vastly improved over the years with advances in medicine, telemedicine and great teamwork. The use of intravenous tPA (medicine that helps to breakdown clots) has increased in the treatment of acute ischemic stroke. However, prevention of stroke is always the better option.

There are certain risk factors that individuals can control to reduce their risk of having a stroke including high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, physical inactivity and obesity. One risk factor for stroke that is often overlooked is that of substance abuse, especially in young adults. Besides stroke it can lead to many other health issues like heart attack, seizures etc.

6 - 12% of strokes that occur in young adults are due to substance abuse. Over the last decade, the number of strokes due to substance abuse has increased, especially in men and the African-American population. The drugs most commonly used which lead to stroke are cocaine, heroin and amphetamines. These drugs can cause ischemic strokes, hemorrhagic strokes and subarachnoid hemorrhages. It has been reported that half of young adults with a stroke were current smokers, and 1 in 5 abused illegal drugs.

This issue needs to be addressed especially since these patients are young and will have an earlier onset of illness and death. Their families are highly devastated since these patients are young. Since these young patients often do not have other risk factors for stroke such as high blood pressure, the risk factor of drug abuse can be changed with treatment. Appropriate help with a timely referral to a drug treatment program and increasing awareness of the risk of stroke with drug use will hopefully decrease the incidence of disability in these young patients.

If you are a patient that struggles with addiction or a family member of one, please talk to your doctor about getting treatment. Treatment for addiction can help to prevent a future stroke!



Institute on Aging Offers AARP Driver Safety Course

The UAMS Reynolds Institute on Aging is offering the AARP Driver Safety Program. The program will be held:

-September 14

-November 9

All classes are 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Institute on Aging, Room 1190 on the first floor. Free parking in Reynolds Institute on Aging Parking Lot. For more information, contact Sandra Baker at 501-686-8100 or skbaker@uams.edu.

Tips to Help Prevent Another Stroke continued.....

6. Quit smoking. Ask your health care provider for nicotine products and oral cessation medications to help quit smoking.
7. Stop drug abuse. This is a preventable cause of stroke. Enroll in a rehabilitation program to help overcome an addiction.
8. If you feel depressed, let your doctor know. Join a support group.
9. Use your CPAP mask regularly if you have been diagnosed with sleep apnea.
10. Keep motivated. Have a positive attitude. Do not hesitate to ask for help from your friends, family, doctor, social workers, other stroke survivors and therapists when needed.

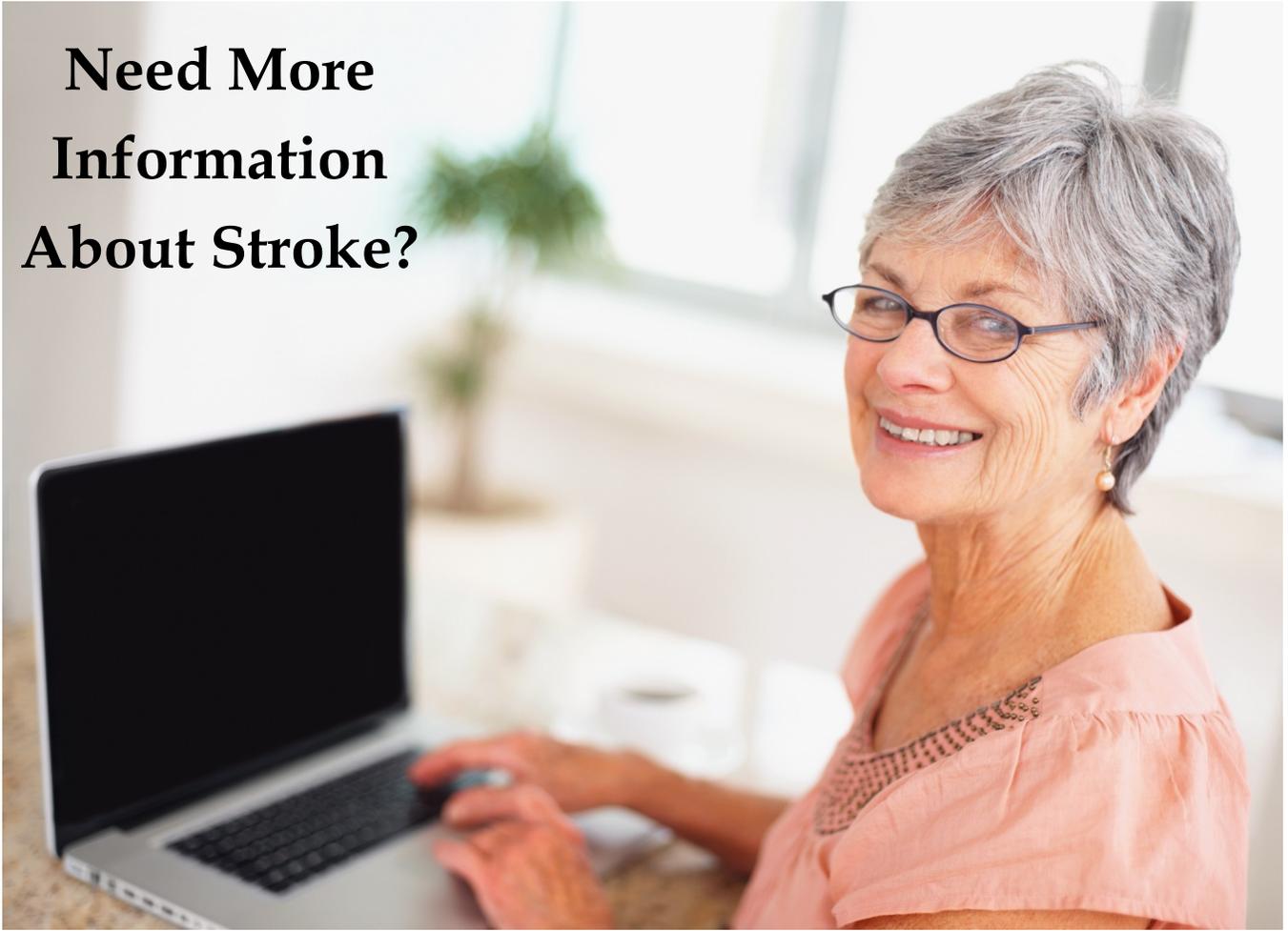


Remember life is precious and multiple of these factors are in your hands. Prevent the next stroke!

STROKE is an Emergency.
Every minute counts.
ACT F.A.S.T!

	F ACE	Does one side of the face droop? Ask the person to smile.
	A RMS	Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
	S PEECH	Is speech slurred? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the sentence repeated correctly?
	T IME	If the person shows any of these symptoms, Call 911 or get to the hospital immediately.

**Need More
Information
About Stroke?**



National Stroke Association

1-800-STROKES (787-6537)

www.stroke.org

American Stroke Association

1-888-4-STROKE (478-7653)

www.strokeassociation.org

UAMS Neurology Department

501-686-5838

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