

Stroke

Each person has specific toxic exposures along with dietary and genetic weaknesses that are causing their symptoms. Toxic exposures can be inorganic like heavy metals, DDT, VOC's, Radio-active waste and any other chemical like food additives or pesticides and fertilizers sprayed on the foods. They can also be organic or living organisms like parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi. All the different possible combinations make it difficult to accurately address issues unless you have experienced medical professionals mapping through all your different clinical symptoms.

Dr. Marilyn Tucker founded The Vibrant Health Community to do Symptom Mapping to be able to bring a completely personalized plan for each person. When you join the Vibrant Health Community you have your own medical team of doctor, pharmacist and health coach. This Team specializes in Integrative-Complementary Medicine. They will work with your personal physician to bring you to a place of as much natural healing as your body will allow. For those of you that have health issues that require prescription medications, your Team can help introduce natural measures that can reduce the imbalances and complications that inevitably come with prescription medication. This can reduce side effects and possible additional drugs having to be introduced.

Definition

A stroke is an interruption of the blood supply to any part of the brain. A stroke is sometimes called a "brain attack."

Alternative Names

Cerebrovascular disease; CVA; Cerebral infarction; Cerebral hemorrhage; Ischemic stroke; Stroke - ischemic

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Every 45 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke. A stroke can happen when:

- A blood vessel carrying blood to the brain is blocked by a blood clot. This is called an *ischemic stroke*.
- A blood vessel breaks open, causing blood to leak into the brain. This is a *hemorrhagic stroke*.

If blood flow is stopped for longer than a few seconds, the brain cannot get blood and oxygen. Brain cells can die, causing permanent damage.

ISCHEMIC STROKE

This is the most common type of stroke. Usually this type of stroke results from clogged arteries, a condition called atherosclerosis. (See stroke secondary to atherosclerosis.) Fatty deposits collect on the wall of the arteries, forming a sticky substance called plaque. Over time, the plaque builds up. Often, the plaque causes the blood to flow abnormally, which can cause the blood to clot. There are two types of clots:

- A clot that stays in place in the brain is called a cerebral thrombus.
- A clot that breaks loose and moves through the bloodstream to the brain is called a cerebral embolism.

Another important cause of cerebral embolisms is a type of arrhythmia called atrial fibrillation. Other causes of ischemic stroke include endocarditis, an abnormal heart valve, and having a mechanical heart valve. A clot can form on a heart valve, break off, and travel to the brain. For this reason, those with mechanical or abnormal heart valves often must take blood thinners.

HEMORRHAGIC STROKE

A second major cause of stroke is bleeding in the brain hemorrhagic stroke. This can occur when small blood vessels in the brain become weak and burst. Some people have defects in the blood vessels of the brain that make this more likely. The flow of blood after the blood vessel ruptures damages brain cells.

STROKE RISKS

High blood pressure is the number one reason that you might have a stroke. The risk of stroke is also increased by age, family history of stroke, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease.

Certain medications increase the chances of clot formation, and therefore your chances for a stroke. Birth control pills can cause blood clots, especially in woman who smoke and who are older than 35.

Men have more strokes than women. But, women have a risk of stroke during pregnancy and the weeks immediately after pregnancy.

Cocaine use, alcohol abuse, head injury, and bleeding disorders increase the risk of bleeding into the brain.

Symptoms

The symptoms of stroke depend on what part of the brain is damaged. In some cases, a person may not even be aware that he or she has had a stroke.

Usually, a SUDDEN development of one or more of the following indicates a stroke:

- Weakness or paralysis of an arm, leg, side of the face, or any part of the body
- Numbness, tingling, decreased sensation
- Vision changes
- Slurred speech, inability to speak or understand speech, difficulty reading or writing
- Swallowing difficulties or drooling
- Loss of memory
- Vertigo (spinning sensation)
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Personality changes
- Mood changes (depression, apathy)
- Drowsiness, lethargy, or loss of consciousness
- Uncontrollable eye movements or eyelid drooping

If one or more of these symptoms is present for less than 24 hours, it may be a transient ischemic attack (TIA). A TIA is a temporary loss of brain function and a warning sign for a possible future stroke.

Expectations (prognosis)

The long-term outcome from a stroke depends on the extent of damage to the brain, the presence of any associated medical problems, and the likelihood of recurring strokes.

Of those who survive a stroke, many have long-term disabilities, but about 10% of those who have had a stroke recover most or all function. Fifty percent are able to be at home with medical assistance while 40% become residents of a long-term care facility like a nursing home.

Complications

- Problems due to loss of mobility (joint contractures, pressure sores)
- Permanent loss of movement or sensation of a part of the body
- Bone fractures
- Muscle spasticity
- Permanent loss of brain functions
- Reduced communication or social interaction
- Reduced ability to function or care for self
- Decreased life span
- Side effects of medications
- Aspiration
- Malnutrition

Calling your health care provider

Call your local emergency number (such as 911) if someone has symptoms of a stroke. Stroke requires immediate treatment!

Prevention

To help prevent a stroke:

- Get screened for high blood pressure at least every 2 years, especially if you have a family history of high blood pressure.
- Have your cholesterol checked. If you are high risk, your LDL "bad" cholesterol should be lower than 70 mg/dL.
- If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease, make sure you follow your doctor's treatment recommendations.
- Follow a low-fat diet.
- Quit smoking.
- Exercise regularly -- 30 minutes a day if you are not overweight; 60 - 90 minutes a day if you are overweight.
- Do not drink more than 1 to 2 alcoholic drinks a day.

Aspirin therapy (81mg a day or 100mg every other day) is now recommended for stroke prevention in women under 65 as long as the benefits outweigh the risks. It should be considered for women over age 65 only if their blood pressure is controlled and the benefit is greater than the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding and brain hemorrhage. Ask your doctor if aspirin is right for you.

Your doctor may also recommend that you take aspirin or another blood thinner if you have had a TIA or stroke in the past, or if you currently have a heart arrhythmia (like atrial fibrillation), mechanical heart valve, congestive heart failure, or risk factors for stroke.

Carotid endarterectomy (removal of plaque from the carotid arteries) may help prevent new strokes from occurring in people with large blockage in their blood vessels.

References

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