



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM **Always Best Care**

Healthy Living to Reduce Stroke Risk

Making healthy choices is an essential part of daily life. Simple changes in diet, exercise, and lifestyle can have a positive impact on your health and help reduce risk of many illnesses, diseases, and other conditions, including strokes. May is National Stroke Awareness Month and a great time to brush up on what you need to know to stay healthy.

One of the most important things to know are the signs of a stroke. Getting help as soon as possible is imperative. You can remember the most common symptoms by using the acronym “FAST”:

- **F**ace drooping on one side. Ask the person to smile – is it lopsided?
- **A**rm weakness. Raise both arms out to the side – does one drift downward?
- **S**peech problems. Is their speech slurred or confused? Ask them to repeat a simple sentence.
- **T**ime – act quickly to call 911 if you notice any of these symptoms, even if they resolve themselves.

There are certain risk factors associated with strokes that are uncontrollable. These include age, family history, gender, and race. However, while these issues are outside of your control, there are many factors that are within your control. Being aware and proactive about making meaningful changes in your life can pay off. There are a variety of ways that seniors can reduce their risk of stroke:

- Manage conditions such as blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. High blood pressure or cholesterol and uncontrolled diabetes can greatly increase your risk of stroke. These issues make your heart and body work harder than they should.
- Stop smoking. Smoking is one of the greatest controllable risk factors for a stroke. It increases plaque buildup in the arteries, thickens blood, and increases clot formation. It's not too late to quit and the body begins recovering almost immediately.
- Stay active and aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days per week. Keep things interesting by trying different activities and switching things up. Senior fitness groups can be a safe and fun way to exercise while boosting [heart health](#).
- Eat a well-balanced diet. Focus on fresh fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. Try to avoid too much sodium, sugar, unhealthy fats, and processed foods.

- Make sure you are [taking medications as prescribed](#) to help control blood pressure, diabetes, blood clots, and other conditions. Your doctor may prescribe daily low-dose aspirin to help reduce stroke risk.

Many of these changes are nothing dramatic – it's simply refining or adjusting what you're already doing. Taking steps to protect your health can support aging and quality of life. An in-home caregiver can provide reminders for taking medication, help find senior fitness groups, support daily activities, schedule appointments, and much more. This can be a big help when it comes to implementing changes to reduce stroke risk and stay on top of health. [Always Best Care](#) provides seniors with the services they need, when they need them, and where they need them. Call (855) 470-2273 to learn more about how senior services can help you or a loved one and schedule a free consultation.