



Have a chronic condition? Know your stroke risk

Stroke, which happens when blood flow is cut off to the brain suddenly, can happen to anyone. But if you have a chronic condition, your stroke risk may increase, and that's all the more reason you should talk to your doctor. Because of its rapid onset, stroke can be scary – and deadly. In fact, it's the fifth most common cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States.

Should you be concerned?

If you have a health condition that impacts your blood flow, you may have an increased stroke risk. These conditions include:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary artery disease
- Atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High cholesterol

Other factors

Even if you don't have a chronic health condition, you may be at risk for a stroke, especially if you have a family history of it.

Other risk factors include smoking, stress, eating an unhealthy diet, not getting enough physical activity, using nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (other than aspirin) and using birth control pills.

Identifying a stroke when it happens

If you think you or someone else is having a stroke, immediately call **911**. Remembering the word "FAST" can help you identify the symptoms of stroke:

F: Face drooping: Does one side of the face droop, or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the smile uneven?

A: Arm weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S: Speech difficulty: Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? See if the person can repeat a simple sentence like, "The sky is blue."

T: Time to call 911: If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call **911**.

Have you had a stroke?

You may be eligible to participate in Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey's Case Management program. This voluntary program is free and available to all members. To learn more or enroll, call **1-888-621-5894** and select prompt **2**.

Sources: American Stroke Association, WebMD



NJWELL is an incentive-based wellness program offered to active employees and their covered spouses who participate in the SHBP/SEHBP. More detail can be found on <http://www.nj.gov/njwell/>.

Please Note: Preventive care services and screenings are only covered when rendered by an in-network doctor or other health care professional.

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