Tip of the Week 1 – Know Stroke Symptoms

Many people don’t know that if you can recognize the symptoms of a stroke you can save not only your life, but maybe the life of someone else. Being able to recognize symptoms and to understand that they signal an emergency, you are able to seek medical attention quickly. Treatment exists to minimize the effects of stroke; however it must be given within 3 hours of the first symptom. It is easy for people to recognize stroke symptoms by learning to think **F.A.S.T.**

**F**=Face  
Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A**=Arms  
Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S**=Speech  
Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred?

**T**=Time  
If you observe any of these signs, then it’s time to call 9-1-1.

Tip of the Week 2 – Control Blood Pressure to Prevent Stroke

Did you know…High blood pressure is the number one cause of stroke? Yet, nearly 60 million Americans have high blood pressure, and almost a third do not know they have it!

- Have your blood pressure checked at least once a year – more often if you have a history of high blood pressure, have had a heart attack are diabetic or are overweight.
- Know your family medical history, if high blood pressure runs in your family it’s important that you ask your doctor about how to control your blood pressure.
- If you have high blood pressure it’s important to follow the recommendations of your doctor, which may include changes in diet, regular exercise and the use of medication.

Tip of the Week 3 – Manage Cholesterol to Prevent Stroke

Next time you think about burgers and fries, think about this…There are many things – including foods high in saturated fat – that can cause arteries to become blocked through the gradual build-up of cholesterol, called plaque. Cholesterol is a soft, waxy fat (lipid) that is made by the body. It is found in the bloodstream and in all of your body’s cells. Your body needs cholesterol to form cell membranes, some hormones and vitamin D. Cholesterol is also found in some foods, such as eggs, meats and dairy products. Cholesterol or plaque build-up in the arteries can block normal blood flow to the brain and cause a stroke. High cholesterol may also increase your risk for stroke by raising your risk for heart disease, a stroke risk factor. There are two types of cholesterol: low-density lipoproteins (LDL) and high-density lipoproteins (HDL).

- It’s important to understand your numbers because they are key measurements of your stroke risk.
- For most people the combined HDL (good cholesterol) and LDL (bad cholesterol) should fall below 200.
- Maintain a healthy cholesterol level by eating a diet low in saturated fat and incorporating exercise into your routine.
- Ask your doctor how you can improve any numbers that are not in normal range.
Tip of the Week 4 – Manage Diabetes to Prevent Stroke
Did you know that 6.2 million people in the United States are unaware that they have diabetes? People with diabetes are at increased risk of stroke because diabetes adversely affects the arteries. Stroke risk is two-and-a-half times higher in people with diabetes compared to those without diabetes.

- Ask your doctor if you are at risk, if you have a family history of diabetes. It may be necessary for you to be tested regularly.
- If you have diabetes it is important for you to monitor your blood sugar and weight gain, including A1C levels.
- Take medicine as directed (including insulin). Follow the treatment guidelines of your doctor and if you have any questions make sure to ask your doctor.
- Manage your diet and exercise to control blood sugar levels.

Tip of the Week 5 – Make Lifestyle Changes to Prevent Stroke
Many people don't know... Stroke is one of the most preventable of all life-threatening health problems. By making simple lifestyle changes you can reduce your risk of stroke.

- Get moving, stay active and incorporate exercise into your daily regime.
- Don’t smoke! If you are a regular smoker, make a resolution to quit. It may be one of the very best things you can do for your health.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that is low in fat and sodium, but rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation.

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