
Risk Factors for Stroke

Certain health and lifestyle issues—called risk factors—increase your chances of having a stroke. The biggest risk factor for stroke is high blood pressure. But there are many other factors that also put you at risk. The below list can help you identify which risk factors you have. That way, you know where you need to make healthy changes. Talk with your healthcare provider about ways to help reduce your risk factors.

What are your risk factors?

Risk factors are different for each person. Check off the factors that apply to you. Keep in mind that some factors, such as your age, can't be changed. But others can be managed.

Health risk factors

- ☐ You have high blood pressure.
- ☐ You're overweight.
- ☐ You have unhealthy cholesterol levels.
- ☐ You have atrial fibrillation.
- ☐ You have atrial flutter.
- ☐ You've had a heart attack.
- ☐ You have narrowed arteries.
- ☐ You have diabetes.
- ☐ You are a man.
- ☐ You are an African American.
- ☐ You are an Alaska Native.
- ☐ You are an American Indian.

Lifestyle risk factors

- ☐ You rarely exercise.
- ☐ You often eat salty, fried, or greasy foods.
- ☐ You smoke.
- ☐ You have more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day.

Age and family history

- ☐ You're over age 60.
- ☐ A parent, brother, or sister has had a stroke.

Metabolic syndrome

Any of the factors above puts you at increased risk for stroke. But having 3 or more of certain risk factors raises your risk more. This is a condition called metabolic syndrome. These factors include too much weight around your waist, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and unhealthy cholesterol levels. If you're a woman, your risks may also include polycystic ovary syndrome. If you have any of these risk factors, be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about how to decrease your risk of stroke and improve your overall health.