

# Be aware of the symptoms of stroke, get help immediately



This is the ninth article in a series focusing on cardiovascular disease presented by DeKalb Medical.

Mr. Smith was a great employee. He was always on time, well dressed and prepared for every meeting. So when he came to work late and looked a little disoriented and disheveled, his colleagues were worried about him. He seemed to be having some trouble with his balance and couldn't form a complete sentence. He was also complaining of his head hurting. Luckily, someone was familiar with the symptoms, and they were able to quickly get him the help he needed.

What was wrong with Mr. Smith? He was having a stroke. According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the No. 3 cause of death in the U.S and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability. Over 160,000 Americans die each year from stroke. The good news is that up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable.

So, what is a stroke? A stroke occurs when a blood vessel bringing blood and oxygen to your brain gets blocked (called an ischemic stroke) or ruptures (called a hemorrhagic stroke). Your brain cells need a constant supply of blood, oxygen and nutrients to work properly. Without oxygen, nerve cells can't function and can die within minutes. This, in turn, causes the part(s) of the body they control to stop functioning.

It is important for you to understand the things that can put you at risk for a stroke. Some risk factors can't be controlled, such as increased age, male gender, heredity, race (African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans are at higher risk), and prior stroke. This



Ask The Doctor  
By Sandeep Chandra, M.D.

makes it very important to control the risk factors that you can, including:

- Smoking (the leading preventable risk factor)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Carotid artery disease
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Certain blood disorders (like sickle cell anemia)
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use
- Illegal drug use

Most often, symptoms occur that alert you when you are having a stroke. These are often sudden and can include weakness or numbness in your face, arm or leg (usually on one side of your body), severe headache, dizziness, trouble walking, loss of coordination, trouble seeing in one or both eyes, confusion and/or trouble speaking.

About 15 percent of strokes are preceded by a TIA or transient ischemic (TRAN-see-ynt is-KE-mik) attack. This is a "mini stroke" that happens when a blood clot blocks an artery for a short period of time. If this or any other symptom occurs, get help immediately. There are treatments that may reduce the risk of damage caused by stroke, but only if you get help quickly (within three hours of the first

symptoms). If you think you are having a stroke, call 9-1-1 right away!

Eating healthy, getting regular exercise, limiting alcohol, avoiding drugs and tobacco, and having regular medical check-ups will help keep you healthy. Talk with your doctor about your risk for stroke and the things you can do to protect yourself and those you love from this deadly disease.

## Savory Meatloaf



- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 1 cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs
- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 cups bell pepper, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 3 Tbsp. ketchup (optional)

For this dish, we substituted ground turkey for the usual 1 pound of ground chuck and added lots of chopped veggies.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large bowl, combine all ingredients, except for extra ketchup. Place mixture in 9x5-inch nonstick loaf pan. Bake 1 hour, uncovered. Let stand 10 minutes. Spread extra ketchup on top, if desired. Slice and serve.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research