



Visiting Angels Named *Caring Star Agency*
TWO YEARS IN A ROW



COMMUNITY RESOURCE BULLETIN

February is American Heart Month

Heart Disease is the Leading Cause of Death in the U.S.

Know the signs and risks; make lifestyle changes to live healthier!

Since heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., you probably have been affected by the disease in one way or another. According to recent NJ statistics, one in four deaths have been resulted from heart disease, and nearly 5% of total deaths were due to stroke in NJ. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing coronary heart disease. The good news is that although it's one of the leading causes of death, it's also one of the most preventable diseases. We at Visiting Angels encourage you to become educated about and take precautions to ward off this tragic disease.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ♥ **Chest discomfort** in the center of the chest, possibly feeling like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain
- ♥ **Upper body discomfort** in one or both arms, the back, neck, stomach, or jaw
- ♥ **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort
- ♥ **Other signs** include nausea, lightheadedness, or breaking out in a cold sweat

RISK FACTORS

- ♥ **Age**—Adults 65 and older account for 82 percent of people who die of coronary heart disease
- ♥ **Gender** — Men have a greater risk of having a heart attack than women & have attacks at an earlier age. Women's death rate from heart disease increases after menopause (and is the leading cause of death for American women)
- ♥ **Heredity**—Children whose parents have heart disease have more a chance of developing it themselves. African Americans tend to have higher blood pressure than Caucasians and have a higher rate of heart disease.

- ♥ **Tobacco smoke**
- ♥ **High blood cholesterol**
- ♥ **Physical inactivity**
- ♥ **Obesity and overweight**
- ♥ **Not eating fruits and vegetables every day**
- ♥ **Diabetes**
- ♥ **Stress**
- ♥ **Too much alcohol**

LOCAL RESOURCE

- ♥ American Heart Association, 1 Union St., Ste. 301, Robbinsville, NJ, (609) 208-0020, www.heart.org

Phone: (609) 883-8188

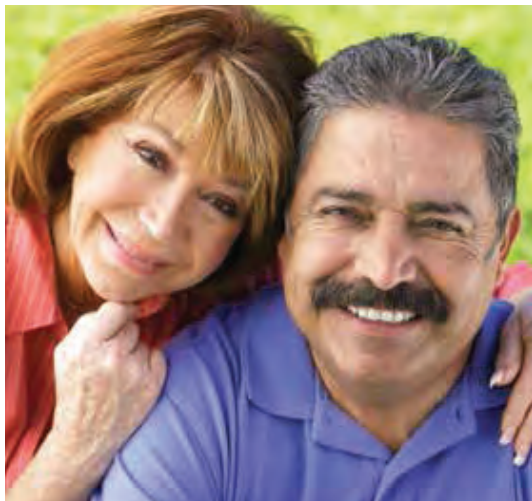
www.NJSeniorCare.com

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ABCS of Heart Health

To reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke



Every year, Americans suffer more than **1.5 million heart attacks and strokes**. But following the ABCS can help reduce your risk and improve your heart health.

A: Take **aspirin** as directed by your health care professional.

B: Control your **blood pressure**.

C: Manage your **cholesterol**.

S: Don't **smoke**.

A Take aspirin as directed by your health care professional.

Ask your health care professional if aspirin can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Be sure to tell your health care professional if you have a family history of heart disease or stroke, and mention your own medical history.

B Control your blood pressure.

Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. If your blood pressure stays high for a long time, you may suffer from high blood pressure (also called hypertension). High blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack or stroke more than any other risk factor. Find out what your blood pressure numbers are, and ask your health care professional what those numbers mean for your health. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care professional to lower it.

C Manage your cholesterol.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance produced by the liver and found in certain foods. Your body needs cholesterol, but when you have too much, it can build up in your arteries and cause heart disease. There are different types of cholesterol: One type is “good” and can protect you from heart disease, but another type is “bad” and can increase your risk. Talk to your health care professional about cholesterol and how to lower your bad cholesterol if it's too high.

S Don't smoke.

Smoking raises your blood pressure, which increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. If you smoke, quit. Talk with your health care professional about ways to help you stick with your decision. It's never too late to quit smoking. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW today.

Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. It is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, two agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services.

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Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States.

Together, these diseases cause 1 in 3 deaths.

The good news is that you can reduce your risk by following the ABCS!

Continued on reverse →

Rosa was caring for her granddaughter when she felt a sharp pain in her chest that didn't go away. At the hospital, the health care professional told her that she had high blood pressure and that it had caused a heart attack. Rosa was surprised—she didn't feel bad most of the time and didn't know she had high blood pressure. The health care professional gave Rosa medicine to help control her blood pressure and prevent another heart attack. Rosa takes her medicine every day so she can keep her blood pressure under control. It's important to Rosa to stay healthy. She wants to see her granddaughter grow up and get married one day.



What do I need to know about high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart attack and stroke in the United States. It can also damage your eyes and kidneys. **One in three American adults has high blood pressure, and only about half of them have it under control.**

How is blood pressure measured? Two numbers (for example, 140/90) help determine blood pressure. The first number measures systolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats. The second number measures diastolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart rests between beats.

When and how should I take my blood pressure?

Take your blood pressure regularly, even if you feel fine. Generally, people with high blood pressure have no symptoms. You can take your blood pressure at home, at many pharmacies, and at your doctor's office.

The doctor is not the only health care professional who can help you follow the ABCS. Nurses, pharmacists, community health workers, health coaches, and other professionals can work with you and your doctor to help you achieve your health goals.

Need confidential health information? Call the Su Familia Helpline at 1-866-783-2645 today.

Su Familia: The National Hispanic Family Health Helpline offers free, reliable information on a wide range of health issues in Spanish and English. The health promotion advisors can help Hispanic clients find affordable health care services in their community.

How can I control my blood pressure? Work with your health care professional to make a plan for controlling your blood pressure. Be sure to follow these guidelines:

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Choose foods low in trans fat and sodium (salt). Most people in the United States consume more sodium than recommended. Everyone age 2 and up should consume less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Adults age 51 and older; African Americans of all ages; and people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should consume even less than that: only 1,500 mg of sodium per day.
- **Get moving.** Staying physically active will help you control your weight and strengthen your heart. Try walking for 10 minutes, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.
- **Take your medications.** If you have high blood pressure, your health care professional may give you medicine to help control it. It's important to follow your health care professional's instructions when taking the medication and to keep taking it even if you feel well. Tell your health care professional if the medicine makes you feel bad. Your health care team can suggest different ways to reduce side effects or recommend another medicine that may have fewer side effects.

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Visit millionhearts.hhs.gov and pledge to live a longer, healthier life today.



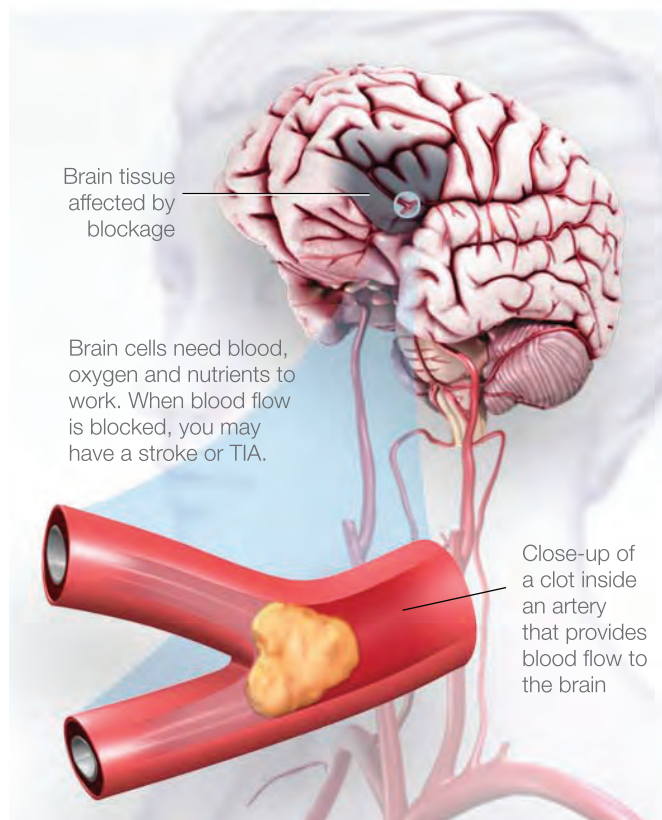


let's talk about

Stroke, TIA and Warning Signs

Stroke occurs when a blood vessel bringing blood and oxygen to the brain gets blocked or ruptures. When this happens, brain cells don't get the blood and oxygen that they need to survive. This causes nerve cells stop working and die within minutes. Then, the part of the body they control can't function either. The effects of stroke may be permanent depending on how many cells are lost, where they are in the brain, and other factors.

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in America.



What is a TIA?

TIA, or transient ischemic attack, is a “minor or mini stroke” that occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery for a short time. The symptoms of a TIA are the same as those of a stroke, but they usually last only a few minutes. About 15 percent of major strokes are preceded by TIAs, so **don't ignore a TIA. Call 9-1-1 or seek emergency medical attention immediately!**

Isn't stroke hopeless?

No. Stroke is largely preventable. You can reduce your stroke risk by living a healthy lifestyle — controlling high blood pressure; not smoking; eating a healthy diet low in saturated and *trans* fats; being physically active; maintaining a healthy body weight; managing diabetes; and drinking alcohol moderately or not at all.

Also, much has been done to fight the effects of stroke. There is a clot-dissolving drug called tissue plasminogen

activator (tPA) to treat stroke. tPA can stop a stroke in progress and reduce disability from stroke by breaking up a blood clot that might be stopping the flow of blood to the brain. But to be eligible for tPA, you must seek emergency treatment right away and have a clot-caused stroke. It must be given within 3 to 4.5 hours after symptoms start. The sooner tPA is given, the greater the possibility of a better outcome after stroke.

For people with blood clots in larger arteries, tPA often does not dissolve them completely. In this case, a procedure, called mechanical thrombectomy, should be done within six hours of the first symptoms of stroke. In most cases this is done only after the patient receives IV tPA. To remove the clot, doctors thread a catheter (thin tube) with a stent through an artery in the groin up to the blocked artery in the brain. The stent opens and grabs the clot. The doctors then remove the stent with the trapped clot. If necessary, other devices may be used.

Continued on reverse →

What are warning signs of stroke?

You and your family should recognize the warning signs of stroke. You may have some or all of these signs. Note the time when symptoms start and call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical number in your area. Stroke is a medical emergency!

Don't ignore these warning signs, even if they go away. Timing is important.

Stroke Warning Signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember how to recognize a stroke and what to do. **F**ace drooping. **A**rm weakness. **S**peech Difficulty. **T**ime to call 9-1-1.

Before you need to take emergency action, create a list of emergency phone numbers and keep a copy next to your phone and with you at all times.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) to learn more about stroke or find local support groups, or visit **StrokeAssociation.org**.
- 2 Sign up to get *Stroke Connection* magazine, a free magazine for stroke survivors and caregivers at **strokeconnection.org**.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with stroke by joining our Support Network at **strokeassociation.org/supportnetwork**.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

Which facility close to me is best equipped to treat me if I am having stroke symptoms?

How can I reduce my risk for stroke?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **strokeassociation.org/letstalkaboutstroke** to learn more.

MYTH or FACT: The Truth about Cardiovascular Medications

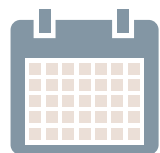


When you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, your medication can help give you the freedom to keep doing what you love. Check out these common myths about cardiovascular medications. Are any of these holding you back?



MYTH #1: I've heard that the side effects of medications for high blood pressure and high cholesterol are not worth it.

FACT: Any medication can cause side effects, but many people do not experience negative effects from taking medication for high blood pressure or high cholesterol. For those that do, the side effects are often mild. But if you're worried or are experiencing side effects, talk to your healthcare providers. They can help you choose a medication that works for you, so you can keep going strong for the ones you love.



MYTH #2: I feel fine, so I can stop taking my medication.

FACT: For your medication to work properly, you should always take it as prescribed. Never stop taking medication without first talking to your healthcare provider and always remember to follow the recommendations of your healthcare team.



MYTH #3: I'm taking my medication, so I can eat whatever I want.

FACT: Taking medication does not eliminate the need for a healthy lifestyle. While medication can help control your high blood pressure or high cholesterol, it's important to eat healthy and enjoy regular physical activity as well. Consider grilling or baking instead of frying, eat fresh fruits and vegetables, and check nutrition labels to find foods with 140 mg or less of sodium. Above all, always remember to follow your healthcare provider's advice.

MYTH #4: I eat healthy and exercise, so I don't need to or can eventually stop taking my medication.

FACT: High blood pressure or high cholesterol can be lifelong issues. Healthy eating and exercise can make a difference, but these changes may not always be enough to control high blood pressure or high cholesterol. If you need medication, taking it as prescribed can reduce your chance of having a heart attack or stroke. Remember to talk to your healthcare provider about your personal health history and what's right for you.



MYTH #5: I've never had a heart attack or stroke, so I don't need to make lifestyle changes.

FACT: Just because you've never had a heart attack or stroke doesn't mean that you won't. Don't wait for symptoms. Talk to your healthcare provider and getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly.

STRONG PEOPLE PROTECT THEIR FUTURE AND THE ONES THEY LOVE.

Talk to your healthcare provider about these common myths or visit millionhearts.hhs.gov for more information. It's up to you to decide whether high blood pressure and high cholesterol are in charge, or if you are.

Heart Disease Word Search

Find these words:

Artery
Atherosclerosis
Blood
Brain
Cardiovascular
Cells
Cholesterol
Clots
Diabetes
Disease
Dizziness
Heart
Heartattacks
Numbness
Oxygen
Pressure
Strokes
Triglyceride
Vessels
Weakness

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