7 Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Stroke

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Here are 7 ways to reduce your risk of stroke through dietary and lifestyle changes.

Whether you're a stroke survivor or someone simply trying to live a healthier lifestyle, this article is chock full of facts to keep your body healthy and reduce your risk of stroke.

7. Show Some Skin

Exposing your skin to the sun for just 10 minutes during the middle of the day is enough to get your daily dose of vitamin D. Why should you care about the sunshine vitamin? Because vitamin D deficiency is linked to arterial stiffness, which is a major stroke risk factor. By getting a little sunshine every day, or supplementing with vitamin D if you live in cloudy climates, you can reduce your risk of recurrent stroke!

6. Sweat a Little

According to Medscape Medical News, exercising enough to break a sweat a few times a week can reduce your risk of stroke by 20%! Exercise directly reduces your risk of stroke by improving the health of your blood vessels, reducing high blood pressure, and promoting a healthy weight. Exercise can also help alleviate post stroke depression because of the endorphins and other biochemical that the body releases to give us that 'runner's high.'

5. Become Salt Savvy

For every 500mg increase of sodium per day, your risk of stroke increases by 18%! according to WebMD. Why is salt such a big deal? Because excessive salt intake is linked to many stroke risk factors, and it also aggravates preexisting stroke risk factors, like hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. To keep salt management simple, try to avoid the 5 worst salty foods and avoid frequent restaurant dining because entrees are often loaded with more than a day's worth of salt!

4. Manage Cholesterol

Some cholesterol in the diet is absolutely necessary for good health. But when you consume too much, it causes plaque to build up on the walls of your arteries and restricts blood flow, which increases your risk of stroke. You can read our article on managing cholesterol for more details. But to give a brief overview, try eating more fiber-rich foods (like beans, oats, and veggies) and limit your intake of saturated fats (like butter, red meats, and palm oil).

3. Get All Your Vitamins

One of the most popular posts here on the blog is our top 3 vitamins for stroke recovery. In the article, we mention that CoQ10, vitamin B3, and ginko biloba can all potentially help reduce your risk of stroke and promote a healthy recovery. You can read the article for more details and learn about a few honorable mentions! It's important to note that getting these vitamins from food is far better than getting them through supplements. And it's less expensive that way, too!

2. Boost Your Immunity

Recent studies have shown that foods high in vitamin C can help reduce your risk of hemorrhagic stroke. Although this is the less common form of stroke – it's more deadly. And if you think you already get enough vitamin C in your diet, you may want to think again.

In the study, researchers tested the vitamin C levels of 65 hemorrhagic stroke survivors, and this is what they found:

- 41% of patients had normal levels
- 45% had depleted levels
- 14% were deficient

In other words, over half of the survivors weren't getting enough vitamin C! To boost your intake naturally, try eating more oranges, bell peppers, strawberries, papaya, and broccoli. Which brings us to our last point…

1. Do the Damn Thing

Our last recommendation for stroke prevention and recovery is *eating more vegetables*! **If you eat more fruits and veggies, you can reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack by a whopping 30%!**

Now, actually getting yourself to do this is hard. In fact, this is the step that so many people skip because it's such common advice. But don't skip it. Just… do the damn thing!

And use this guide on 10 ways to eat more fruits and veggies (6/4/2015) to make things easier. If you incorporate all 7 steps from this guide into your lifestyle, you can slash your risk of stroke by a long shot. And you'll feel better for it, too!