

Inflammation and Stroke: What's the Link?

October 29, 2015



Inflammation and stroke are related in two ways. First, when a stroke occurs, your brain becomes inflamed as your body tries to heal itself. Secondly, preexisting inflammation in the body can contribute to the onset of a stroke. Let's examine these two links.

Brain Inflammation and Stroke

When a stroke occurs, your immune system sends agents to repair the damage and deal with the 'aggressor.' This response is a type of inflammatory response, and it's your body's way of healing itself. However, according to biological scientist [Neil Wagner](#), "what started as the death of a small amount of brain tissue becomes much larger due to a molecular cascade." In other words, it becomes way too much of a good thing and the inflammation ends up causing more harm than good.

The inflammation that develops in your brain after stroke is very different from the inflammation in your body before your stroke. Let's look into how that could play a role in the onset of a stroke.

Bodily Inflammation before Stroke

Inflammation in the body is a defense mechanism against infection and injury. If you scrape your knee, that area will become inflamed as your body attempts to heal the area. Unfortunately, a poor lifestyle and bad eating habits could foster long-term bodily inflammation – specifically inflammation in the arteries – that can eventually lead to stroke. Let's look at a specific example.

Inflamed Arteries and Your Risk of Stroke

An article from [Fox News](#) stated that chronic inflammation is best understood in its relation to cardiovascular disease, a strong precursor to stroke. The article uses an example of high cholesterol, explaining that when we have too much LDL cholesterol (the 'bad' cholesterol) in our bloodstream, the body produces an inflammation response in attempt to get rid of the invading cholesterol. Unfortunately, when this inflammation response occurs long-term, it can damage arteries and eventually lead to heart attack or stroke.

How to Reduce Inflammation

Keeping long-term inflammation at bay is essential for good health, but unfortunately the average American's lifestyle is one that fosters this side effect. Chronic stress from corporate jobs and unhealthy diets high saturated fat and cholesterol both increase the amount of LDL cholesterol in the blood stream. As you now know, your body fights elevated LDL levels with inflammation, which damages your arteries and increases your risk of stroke.

So how can you fix it? By eating clean, managing your stress, and getting enough sleep. These are all proven methods of reducing inflammation in the body.