

How to Prevent a Stroke in 9 Smart Steps

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If you are at a higher risk of stroke, then it's very important to learn how to prevent a stroke.

Luckily, it's not complicated. It just takes effort. Here are 10 steps that you can take to help prevent stroke:

1. Exercise Often

Exercise is a great way to help prevent a stroke.

Exercising enough to break a sweat a few times a week can reduce your risk of stroke by 20%, according to Medscape Medical News. Stroke survivors may have difficulty exercising to the point of perspiration due to mobility issues, but don't let that stop you from moving. Just keep improving your mobility and work your way up.

2. Lower Blood Pressure

There are 2 types of stroke: ischemic stroke, which is caused by a clogged artery in the brain, and hemorrhagic stroke, which is caused by a burst artery in the brain.

Having high blood pressure greatly increases your risk of hemorrhagic stroke because the extra pressure in the artery increases the risk of bursting. **To reduce blood pressure, make sure that you're taking blood pressure medicine if prescribed by your doctor.** You can also make dietary changes like **reducing sodium intake** because excess salt can increase blood pressure.

3. Lose Weight and Consider the MIND Diet



You can help prevent a stroke by maintaining a healthy weight, which means a BMI (body mass index) of 18.5-24.9. If you are overweight or obese, which is a stroke risk factor, then you can help prevent a stroke by losing weight. Work with your doctor to create a plan that fits your specific needs.

You can also ask your doctor if [the MIND diet](#) is safe for you to try. **The MIND diet is a brain-healthy diet that has been shown to boost cognitive health in stroke survivors.**

This fusion between the heart-healthy DASH diet and Mediterranean diet encourages you to eat 10 healthy foods and avoid 5 unhealthy foods.

[Discover what those foods are here.](#)

4. Drink a Glass of Red Wine a Day (It Might Keep the Doctors Away)



When it comes to alcohol, achieving balance is critical, especially for stroke prevention.

According to [this comprehensive study on alcohol and stroke risk](#), **light to moderate alcohol consumption was linked to reduced risk of stroke** while high alcohol consumption was linked to higher risk of stroke.

If you decide to participate in light or moderate alcohol consumption (which is 1-2 drinks a day), try to opt for red wine. The antioxidant *resveratrol* found in red wine contains [cardioprotective effects](#) that can help keep your arteries healthy – an important ingredient for stroke prevention!

5. Get Your Heart Beating Smoothly

There's a condition called *atrial fibrillation* that greatly increases your risk of stroke by **5x**.

Atrial fibrillation causes an irregular heartbeat, which can create blood clots in the heart. If those clots travel to the brain, it can lead to an ischemic stroke. To help prevent a stroke, [treat atrial fibrillation](#) as per your doctor's recommendation (usually medication and sometimes surgery).

6. Avoid Damaged Arteries by Managing Blood Sugar

Did you know that having high blood sugar can damage blood vessels over time? This damage increases the chance of a blood clot forming, which can lead to an ischemic stroke.

To help prevent a stroke, it's very important to manage high blood sugar. Luckily, [managing blood sugar](#) is simple – it just requires effort. Some of the best steps to take are **exercising regularly** and **limiting refined carbohydrates** like sugar and flour. These two steps can greatly help regulate high blood sugar.

If you're already following the other steps in this article, like following the MIND diet, this part will come naturally.

7. Kick the Smoking Habit



If you want to prevent a stroke, then you should avoid smoking cigarettes.

Smoking thickens your blood and increases plaque buildup in the arteries – two conditions that increase your risk of ischemic stroke. If you're currently a smoker, it can be difficult to kick the habit. Some people recommend going cold turkey, others recommend substitutes like Nicorette. We recommend trying both and seeing what works for you.

8. Get Your Vitamins

Some vitamins and nutrients that have been shown to help with stroke recovery are:

- [Brain-boosting omega 3's](#)
- [Vitamin B12](#)
- [Vitamin D](#)

The best way to get your vitamins and nutrition is through healthy food.



See this guide on [Natural Ways to Prevent Stroke Using the Potent, Powerful Force of Food](#).

If it's too difficult to get adequate nutrition through your diet, it might be a good idea to consider supplements – with a healthy dose of paranoia.

Reasons to Be Properly Paranoid

Before you start taking supplements, be sure to consult with your doctor. Some supplements actually increase your risk of stroke or interfere with medication, so always triple check with your medical team! Seriously.

To provide an example of what could go wrong, let's take a quick look at ginkgo biloba. **Ginkgo biloba is an herb that's often promoted for stroke recovery that actually *increases* the risk of stroke in some survivors.**

You don't want to make a tragic mistake like that, so always exercise extreme caution when taking supplements.

9. Know What You Can and Can't Control

There are many stroke risk factors that you can work to regulate, like high blood pressure and cigarette smoking. The tips above will help you take control of your health and prevent a stroke.

However, there are some risk factors that you can't control, such as:

- **Prior stroke or TIA** – Stroke survivors and mini stroke survivors are at a higher risk of stroke than those who haven't had one.
- **Heart attack** – Those who have had a heart attack in the past are at a higher risk of stroke.

- **Heredity** – If you were born with genetic disorders that affect your arteries, such as CADASIL, it can increase your risk of stroke.
- **Age** – Your risk of stroke increases as you get older, doubling for each decade past the age of 55.
- **Gender** – Women have a statistically higher risk of stroke than men.

Although you cannot control these risks, there are plenty of healthy lifestyle choices that you can make to reduce your overall risk of stroke.

By doing the best you can to lead a healthy lifestyle, you can help prevent a stroke, along with many other diseases.