

GRAYSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS/WELLNESS NEWSLETTER Prepare Grayson County for TODAY...For Challenges of Tomorrow!

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LEARN MORE ABOUT STROKE....on the next few pages of this quarterly newsletter you will learn more about stroke than you knew existed. However, if you need more information, please contact Grayson County Health Department at 903-465-2878 ext 239 and speak with Janis the Wellness Manager or Denise the Wellness Nurse.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. About 780,000 Americans each year suffer a new or recurrent stroke. That means, on average, a stroke occurs every 40 seconds.
2. Stroke kills more than 150,000 people a year. That's about 1 of every 16 deaths. On average, every 3 to 4 minutes someone dies of stroke. It's the #3 cause of death in the U.S. behind diseases of the heart and cancer.
3. The 2004 stroke rates per 100,000 population for specific groups were 48.1 for white males, 47.2 for white females, 74.9 for black males and 65.5 for black females.
4. Of every 5 deaths from stroke, 21 occur in men and 3 in women.
5. Stroke is the 4th leading cause of death among Hispanics.
6. The prevalence of high blood pressure in African Americans in the U.S. is the highest in the world.
7. This year, more than 100,000 U.S. women under 65 years will have a stroke.

Continued on page 2 to learn about strokes.

What is Stroke?

Stroke is a type of cardiovascular disease. It affects the arteries leading to and within the brain. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, so it starts to die.

What Are the Types of Stroke?

If we consider an isolated blood vessel, the blood flow to the brain tissue can be hampered in two ways:

1. the vessel clogs within (ischemic stroke)
2. the vessel ruptures, causing blood to leak into the brain (hemorrhagic stroke)

ISCHEMIC

Ischemic stroke accounts for about 83 percent of all cases.

Ischemic strokes occur as a result of an obstruction within a blood vessel supplying blood to the brain. The underlying condition for this type of obstruction is the development of fatty deposits lining the vessel walls. This condition is called atherosclerosis. These fatty deposits can cause two types of obstruction:

1. Cerebral thrombosis refers to a thrombus (blood clot) that develops at the clogged part of the vessel.
2. Cerebral embolism refers generally to a blood clot that forms at another location in the circulatory system, usually the heart and large arteries of the upper chest and neck. A portion of the blood clot breaks loose, enters the blood stream and travels through the brain's blood vessels until it reaches vessels too small to let it pass. Another important cause of embolism is an irregular heartbeat, known as atrial fibrillation. It creates conditions where clots can form in the heart, dislodge and travel to the brain.

HEMORRHAGIC

Hemorrhagic stroke accounts for about 17 percent of stroke cases.

It results from a weakened vessel that ruptures and bleeds in the surrounding brain. The blood accumulates and compresses into the surrounding brain tissue. The two types of hemorrhagic strokes are intracerebral hemorrhage or subarachnoid hemorrhage.

Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a weakened blood vessel ruptures. Two types of weakened blood vessels usually cause hemorrhagic stroke: aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations (AVMs).

An aneurysm is a ballooning of a weakened region of a blood vessel. If left untreated, the aneurysm continues to weaken until it ruptures and bleeds into the brain.

An arteriovenous malformation (AVM) is a cluster of abnormally formed blood vessels. Any one of these vessels can rupture, also causing bleeding into the brain.

TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACKS

Also called TIAs, transient ischemic attacks are minor or warning strokes. In a TIA, conditions indicative of an ischemic stroke are present and the typical stroke warning signs develop. However, the obstruction (blood clot) occurs for a short time and tends to resolve itself through normal mechanisms.

DIAGNOSIS OF STROKE

When someone has shown symptoms of a stroke or a TIA, a doctor will gather information and make a diagnosis. A doctor may use many different tests.

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ACUTE AND PREVENTATIVE TREATMENTS

Because their mechanisms are different, the treatments for the types of stroke are different.

- [Ischemic](#) stroke is treated by removing obstruction and restoring blood flow to the brain.
- [Hemorrhagic](#) stroke, doctors introduce an obstruction to prevent rupture and bleeding of aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations

Ischemic

Acute Treatment

- *Clot-busters, e.g., tPA* The most promising treatment for ischemic stroke is the FDA-approved clot-busting drug tPA, which must be administered within a three-hour window from the onset of symptoms to work best. Generally, only 3 to 5 percent of those who suffer a stroke reach the hospital in time to be considered for this treatment.

Preventative Treatment

- *Anticoagulants/Antiplatelets:* Antiplatelet agents such as aspirin, and anticoagulants such as warfarin interfere with the blood's ability to clot and can play an important role in preventing stroke.
- *Carotid Endarterectomy:* Carotid endarterectomy is a procedure in which blood vessel blockage is surgically removed from the carotid artery.
- *Angioplasty/Stents:* Doctors sometimes use balloon angioplasty and implantable steel screens called stents to treat cardiovascular disease in which mechanical devices are used to remedy fatty buildup clogging the vessel.

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Hemorrhagic Stroke

- *Surgical Intervention:* For hemorrhagic stroke, surgical treatment is often recommended to either place a metal clip at the base of the neck of the aneurysm or remove the abnormal vessels comprising an Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM).
- *Endovascular Procedures, e.g., "coils":* Endovascular procedures are less invasive and involve the use of a catheter introduced through a major artery in the leg or arm, guided to the aneurysm or AVM where it deposits a mechanical agent, such as a coil, to prevent rupture.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF STROKE?

The brain is an extremely complex organ that controls various body functions. If a stroke occurs and blood flow can't reach the region that controls a particular body function, that part of the body won't work as it should.

If the stroke occurs toward the back of the brain, it's likely that some disability involving vision will result. The effects of a stroke depend primarily on the location of the obstruction and the extent of brain tissue affected.

Right Brain

The effects of a stroke depend on several factors including the location of the obstruction and how much brain tissue is affected. However, because one side of the brain controls the opposite side of the body, a stroke affecting one side will result in neurological complications on the side of the body it affects. For example, if the stroke occurs in the brain's right side, the left side of the body (and the right side of the face) will be affected, which could produce any or all of the following:

Paralysis on the left side of the body, vision problems, quick, inquisitive behavioral style and memory loss.

Left Brain

If the stroke occurs in the left side of the brain, the right side of the body (and the left side of the face) will be affected, producing some or all of the following:

Paralysis on the right side of the body, speech/language problems, slow, cautious behavioral style and memory loss.

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You can change most of the conditions below through diet and exercise. Others may need medication. Your best defense is knowledge

High blood pressure

High blood pressure is the most important risk factor for stroke. It's often called the "silent killer" because it usually has no symptoms. It affects 40 percent of African-American men and women over age 20. Have your blood pressure checked at least once every two years — and more often if you have a family history of high blood pressure, stroke or heart attack. Then remember your numbers. Compare your results with the chart below.

Blood Pressure (mm hg)	Normal	Prehypertension	High
Systolic	Less than 120	120–139	140 or higher
Diastolic	Less than 80	80–89	90 or higher

Smoking

Smoking cigarettes puts you at much greater risk for having a stroke. Constant exposure to other people's tobacco smoke also increases your risk — even if you don't smoke. If you're a woman who uses birth control pills and smokes, your risk is even higher. The bottom line is this: If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit! When you stop smoking — no matter how long or how much you've smoked — your risk of stroke drops.

Carotid or other artery disease

The carotid arteries in your neck supply blood to your brain. A carotid artery narrowed by fatty deposits may become blocked by a blood clot. Peripheral artery disease is the term for narrowed blood vessels that carry blood to leg and arm muscles. If you have peripheral artery disease, you have a higher risk of carotid artery disease, which raises your risk of stroke.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a fasting plasma glucose (blood sugar level) of 126 mg/dL or more on at least two occasions. It can be controlled, but it still increase your risk for stroke. About 2.7 million African Americans, or over 11 percent, have diabetes. People with diabetes often also have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol, and are overweight. This increases their risk for stroke even more.

High blood cholesterol

A high level of total cholesterol in the blood is a major risk factor for heart disease, which raises your risk of stroke. Among non-Hispanic blacks age 20 and older, more than one-third of men and nearly half of women have total blood cholesterol levels over 200 mg/dL — a level at which the risk for heart attack and stroke increases.

High levels of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fats) can increase the risk of stroke in people with prior coronary heart disease, ischemic stroke or TIA.

A high level of HDL (“good”) cholesterol lowers your risk of heart disease and stroke. A low level of HDL cholesterol raises the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Know your cholesterol numbers by getting screened. Compare your results to the chart below.

Cholesterol Level	Desirable (low risk)	Borderline-High Risk	High Risk
Total cholesterol	Less than 200	200–239	240 or higher
LDL (“bad”) cholesterol	Less than 130*	130–159	160 or higher
HDL (“good”) cholesterol	40 or higher (the higher the better – an HDL of 60 mg/dL and above is considered protective against heart disease.)		

Physical inactivity and obesity

Get up and get moving. That’s the message from the U.S. Surgeon General, who recommends 30 minutes or more of physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week. Being inactive, obese or both can increase your risk of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Regular physical activity helps reduce your risk of heart attack, heart disease and stroke. So find an activity you love, grab a buddy, and stick to it. You’ll like how good you feel!

Excessive alcohol

An average of more than one alcoholic drink a day for women or more than two drinks a day for men raises blood pressure and can lead to a stroke.

Certain blood disorders

A high red blood cell count makes blood clots more likely, increasing the risk of stroke. Doctors may treat this problem by removing blood cells or prescribing “blood thinners.”

Illegal drug use

Intravenous drug abuse carries a high risk of stroke. Cocaine use has also been linked to strokes and heart attacks. Some have been fatal even in first-time users.

Sickle cell anemia is a genetic disorder that mainly affects African-American children. “Sickled” red blood cells are less able to carry oxygen to the body’s tissues and organs. They also tend to stick to blood vessel walls, which can block arteries to the brain and cause a stroke.

[Atrial fibrillation](#)

In atrial fibrillation the heart's upper chambers quiver instead of beating effectively. This lets the blood pool and clot, raising the risk for stroke. If a clot breaks off, enters the bloodstream and lodges in an artery leading to the brain, a stroke results.

[Transient ischemic attacks \(TIAs or "mini strokes"\)](#)

TIAs produce stroke-like symptoms, but no lasting damage. They are strong predictors of stroke. Don't ignore a TIA — call 9-1-1 to get medical attention right away. Learn the signs of [stroke](#). They also apply to TIAs.

[Stroke](#) is a medical emergency. Know these warning signs of stroke and teach them to others. Every second counts:

- 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

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience symptoms!

Time lost is brain lost!

[Knowledge is power!](#)

Learning to recognize the warning signs and acting quickly when they occur can mean the difference in surviving a stroke and minimizing long-term disability, or being physically and mentally devastated or dying from it. Let people know you love them by sharing this important information.

[What You Can Do](#)

Eat a Healthy diet. Healthy food habits can help you reduce three risk factors for heart attack and stroke.—high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight. These guidelines may do more than improve your heart health. They could also reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes.

Exercise every day. Balance the number of calories you eat with those you use up each day, to maintain your best weight.

Know your blood pressure. High blood pressure may not have any symptoms. The only way you will know if your pressure is high is to have it checked, often. If it is high, you may be able to reduce it with diet and exercise.

Stop smoking. There are many benefits to giving up tobacco use. If you or your loved one need an incentive to quit, check out some of the substances in cigarette smoke and tobacco products. You may also call the Health Department for more information.

Stroke Connection brings information and inspiration right to your mailbox. , ***Stroke Connection*** keeps you abreast of how to cope, how to reduce your risk of stroke and how to make the most of each day. [Get your free subscription today!](#) Call the Health Department and we will tell you HOW.

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MARCH IS RED CROSS MONTH. The Texoma Chapter of the American Red Cross will be having 3 fund raising events during the month of March. The Texoma chapter has to raise 75% of the money they use to serve and help Grayson, Fannin and Cooke counties.

1. Heroes Campaign
2. Garage Sale
3. Dinner, dancing, auctions (silent & live).

Heroes Campaign kick off was Friday, February 29, noon at Central Fire Station in Sherman.

Garage Sale was Friday, Saturday, March 14 & 15, with a special surprise on Sunday.

Dinner, dancing, auctions, Saturday, March 29

Call Sharon Watson for more information on these upcoming events at 903-465-1330. Thank you for your continued support.