



Women and Stroke

Knowledge is your Super Power

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UPSTATE
COMPREHENSIVE
STROKE CENTER



What do we think now?.....

- What disease kills more women in a year?
Breast Cancer or Stroke
- Stroke: twice as many
- In a recent survey, women believed breast cancer was five times more prevalent than stroke

And...

- 40% of women said they were only somewhat or not at all concerned about having a stroke

Let's Face Facts.....

- About 55,000 more women than men have a Stroke each year
- Stroke is # 4 cause of death for women, # 5 for men
- 1 in 5 Women will have a Stroke in her lifetime
- About 60% of Stroke deaths are women (2013 ASA data)



A little perspective.....

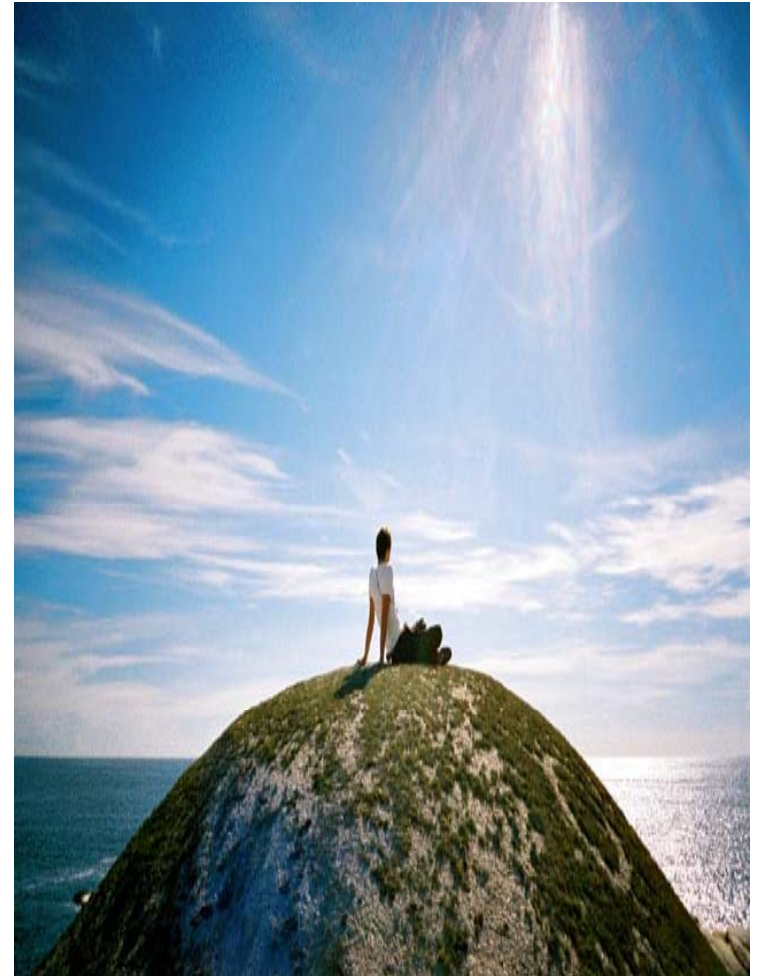
- **Stroke is the leading cause of adult disability!! (both men and women)**
- More than half of all family caregivers in the US are women.
- What happens to the family when they become disabled??



- Because women live longer, they tend to be older when they have their stroke, they are more likely to be living alone & widowed.
- What supports are available?

A little knowledge will help.....

- **Signs of Stroke and What to do**
 - What might I feel or experience?
 - Are **women** different
 - If I see or feel Stroke, what should I do?
- **Unique Risk Factors for Women**
 - Does Stroke only happen to older women?
 - What conditions as a young woman place me at higher risk later?
- **What can I do to lower my risk?**



Stroke Facts

- Stroke is referred to as “**brain attack.**”
- Stroke is a sudden neurological deficit caused by interruption of blood flow to the brain.
- Manifestations of the stroke depend on **which region** or extent of brain affected
- Brain has blood vessels. Like a tree, big branches and small ones which carry nutrients. If larger blood vessels are blocked more of the brain can be damaged.

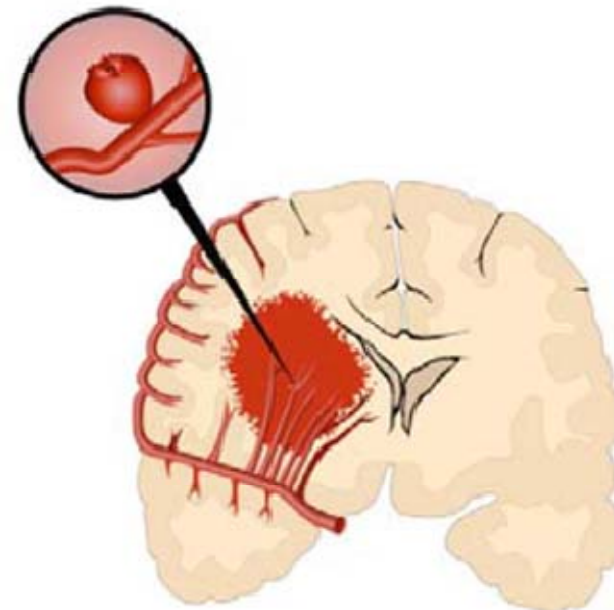
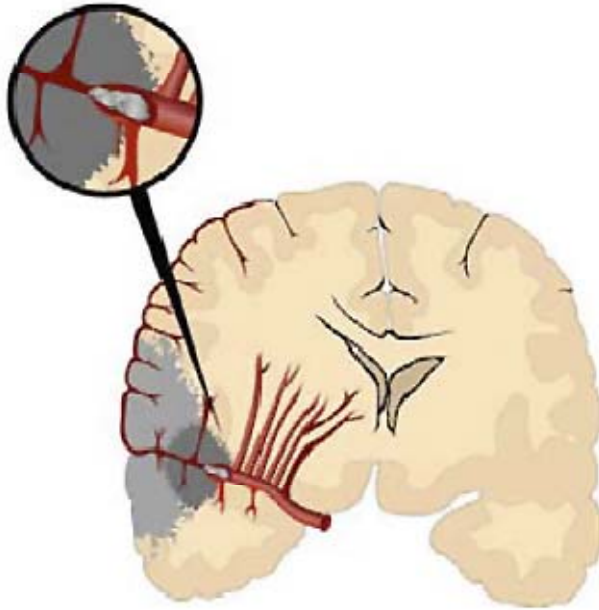


What kinds of Stroke?

An interruption of blood flow to the brain which leads to brain injury.

Ischemic= “blockage”: 85%

Hemorrhagic=“bleeding”: 15%



Knowing changes everything.™

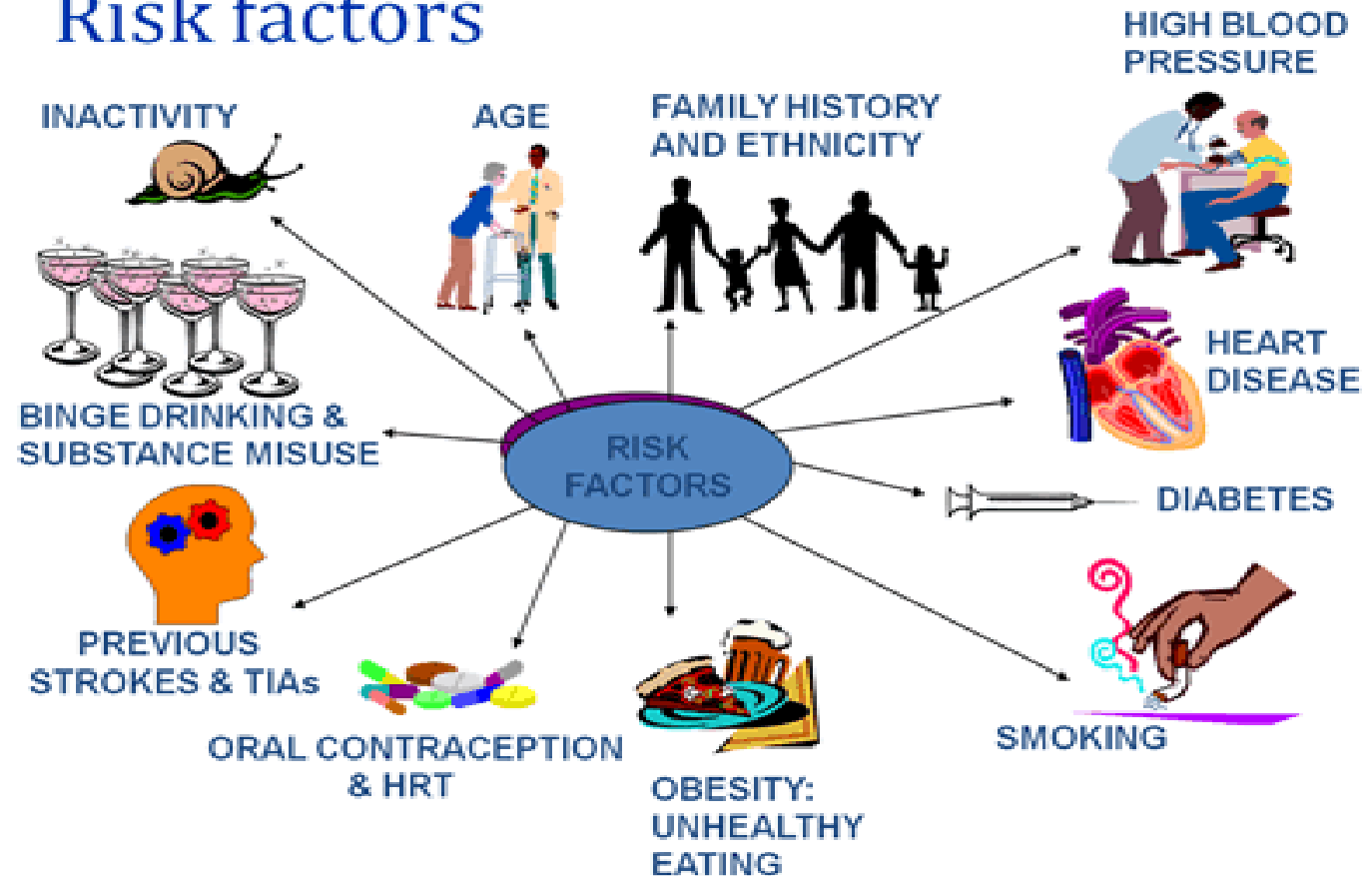
What is a “mini-stroke”?

- aka “Transient ischemic attack” (TIA)
- Warning sign of a future stroke – **up to 40% of TIA patients will have a future stroke**
- Symptoms of TIAs are the same as stroke
- TIA symptoms can resolve within minutes or hours
- It is important to seek immediate medical attention if you suspect that you are having or have had a TIA

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What puts me at risk?

Risk factors



Women: Unique Stroke Risk Factors

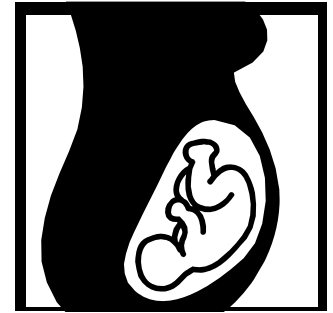
- **High Blood Pressure:** most common one
- What are differences in women?
 - Women are more likely to have high blood pressure than men
 - Often comes after menopause
 - In high risk female populations (ie. Hispanic & African American), starts earlier

38% reduction in women's stroke risk if treated

Lowering BP- greatest impact of all the risk factors



Pregnancy



- Pregnancy is a stroke risk!!
- While not common...more likely 3rd trimester and first 6 weeks after delivery due to physical changes in the body
- Pregnancy related high blood pressure and associated complications (ie. Eclampsia) is the leading cause for increased stroke risk!
 - Obesity
 - Over 40 years old
 - History of high blood pressure, diabetes, vascular or kidney disease
 - Family history of pregnancy related high blood pressure
- **Stroke risk persists well after childbirth, with an increase in chronic hypertension (increasing lifetime risk of stroke)**

Oral Contraceptive Use

- Risk is generally low but.... certain populations need to be aware
- When does the birth control pill increase risk???
 - Older women (ex. 45-49 years old)
 - Combined with smoking
 - Components of metabolic syndrome: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity
 - Those with prior history of blood clots



If you take them, what should you do?

- Know your risk factors!
- Screen blood pressure before starting and monitor
- Stop smoking
- Consider alternative methods if your risk is high

Post-menopausal Hormones

- Early use of hormonal therapy thought to reduce stroke risk
- **Instead, may increase the risk!**



Recommendations:

- Never used for prevention of stroke!
- Use of hormonal therapy for other indications must be balanced with personal risk factors
- Risk factors are cumulative!

Migraines with Aura

- **What is a Migraine?**
- “The most common type of vascular headache involving abnormal sensitivity of **arteries** in the brain to various triggers resulting in rapid changes in the **artery** size due to spasm.”
- **Migraines** can more than double a woman’s stroke risk esp age < 55
- Most people in the US who suffer migraines are women.
- More frequent migraines higher risk –risk factors are cumulative!!





Women as caregivers for children, elderly parents or family members can lead to long-term high levels of emotional and physical stress which increases stroke risk.

Stress and Depression

Stress and Depression

Women are twice as likely than men to experience depression and anxiety

Women report higher stress levels than men



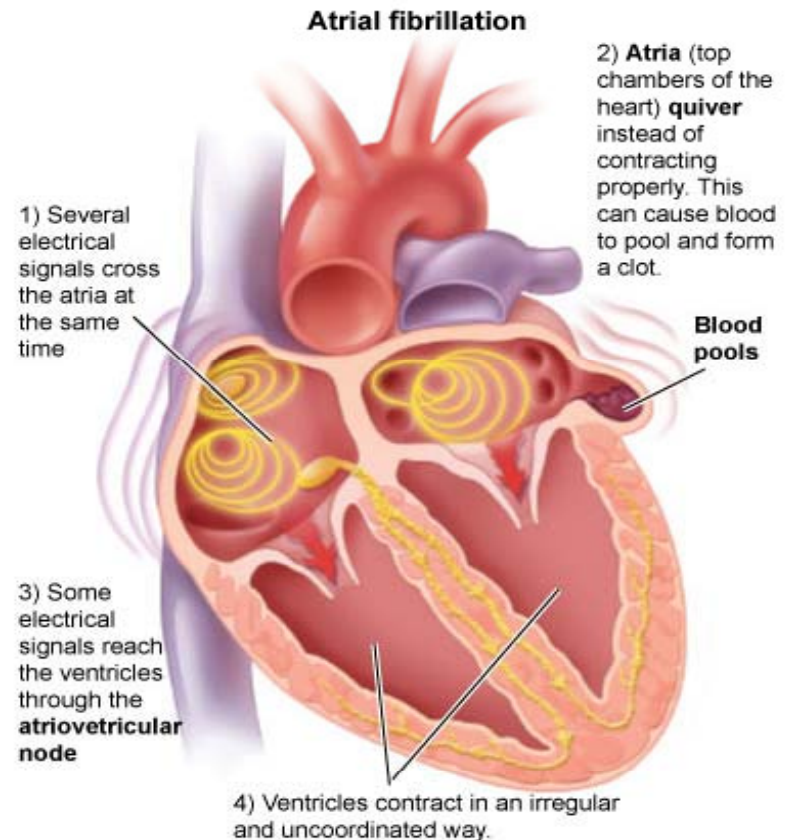
Atrial Fibrillation (Afib)

Special risk

- Atrial fibrillation is a type of heart rhythm disorder called an 'arrhythmia'
- Atrial fibrillation is a condition that occurs when there is a fault in the electric activity in the heart muscle, causing the heart to beat irregularly and in an uncoordinated way.

Afib Quadruples Stroke Risk and is more common in women than men after age 75. Women over 75 should be screened for Afib

Knowing changes everything.™



When the rate of the electrical signals is very high, the atria quiver instead of contracting properly. They fail to pump all the blood out of the atria. The blood can pool and may form a clot. If a blood clot leaves the atria it can block an artery in the body, causing severe complications, such as [stroke](#).

Common Signs of Stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing
- Sudden trouble walking or loss of balance
- Sudden, severe headache



FAST

SPOT A STROKE



Stroke Warning Signs and Symptoms

Stroke Signs Women May Show...

- Loss of consciousness or fainting
 - General weakness
 - Difficulty or shortness of breath
 - Confusion, unresponsiveness or disorientation
 - Sudden behavioral change
 - Agitation
 - Hallucination
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Pain
 - Seizures
 - Hiccups
- yes
 no
 maybe
- ** Makes difficult to recognize-delays treatment



What if you are not sure?

"Body Language" of Stroke

- F = FACE: Ask the person to smile.
- A = ARM: Ask the person to raise both arms.
- S = SPEECH: Ask the person to speak a simple sentence.
- T = TIME: If you observe any of these signs, 9-1-1 immediately



What Next? Panic?

- **NO!!! Call 911**
- Don't try to bring the person yourself
- EMS communicates with the hospital and can help if symptoms worsen
- Do not ignore the symptoms even if they go away!
- Think: when was Last Known Well or Normal ?



tPA Clot Buster or Angiogram

- Only FDA approved treatment
- Time sensitive-3 hour window
- Criteria for getting it
- **Earlier you get it, less risk of bleeding**
- Cerebral “Brain”Angiogram: uses a catheter with a device to break up or suck out the clot restoring blood flow or a coil to close off bleeding



*After all this, I want to **lower my risk***

What can I do?



- ✓ Encourage **all** women to know their own health: Blood pressure, cholesterol
- ✓ Biggest Impact: lower Blood Pressure
- ✓ Get MOVING
- ✓ De-Stress
- ✓ Think Heart-Brain Healthy: Diet
- ✓ Know the signs and what to do



CNY Stroke Support Group

Meetings are held at Healthlinks
On Route 298 Off Carrier Circle
3rd Monday of the month
5-7pm
Different Speakers and Activities
All Patients welcome not just Upstate
Info at : www.upstate.edu



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