



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Maintain Your Brain

World Stroke Day — October 29, 2011

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Karen Hunter] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Karen Hunter, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Strokes are among the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Most often caused by a blockage in an artery that carries blood to the brain, strokes can occur among people of all ages.

Dr. Amy Valderrama is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent strokes. Welcome to the show, Dr. Valderrama.

[Dr. Valderrama] Thanks, Karen.

[Karen Hunter] Dr. Valderrama, what are the symptoms of a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] They include sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms, or legs; sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking; dizziness; loss of balance or coordination; and a sudden severe headache that has no known cause.

[Karen Hunter] Are strokes more common in any particular group?

[Dr. Valderrama] Although strokes can occur at any age, they're more common among older people. Men have greater rates of stroke than women. People who have a family history of stroke are also more likely to have a stroke. And African Americans have higher rates of strokes than whites.

[Karen Hunter] How can a person decrease their chances of having a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] Eat a healthy diet that's low in saturated fat and cholesterol, high in fiber, and low in salt or sodium; maintain a healthy weight; be physically active; don't smoke; and limit alcohol use. And if you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your health care provider's instructions.

[Karen Hunter] What should a person do if they or someone they know thinks they're having a stroke?

[Dr. Valderrama] They should call 9-1-1 immediately. The sooner you get help, the greater your chances are of recovering and having a higher quality of life.

[Karen Hunter] Where can listeners get more information about stroke prevention?

[Dr. Valderrama] Go to www.cdc.gov/stroke.

[Karen Hunter] Thanks, Dr. Valderrama. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Amy Valderrama about recognizing and preventing strokes.

If you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or an irregular heartbeat, you're at greater risk for a stroke. To decrease your chances of having a stroke, exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, limit alcohol consumption, and stop smoking.

Until next time, be well. This is Karen Hunter for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.